CORPORATION OF RANGOON

A HISTORY OF RANGOON

BY

B. R. PEARN

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PREFACE

This History *owes its origin to the inspiration of Mr. M. M. Rafi who, during his term of office as Mayor of Rangoon in 1936, first advanced the proposal that the Corporation of this City should undertake the production of such a work. The Corporation adopted the suggestion and was kind enough to do me the honour of inviting me to compile the* History.

Readers of the book will, I fear, almost inevitably be disappointed in the account of the modern city: it proved impossible, unless the book were to be overloaded with excessive detail, to do justice to all the various branches of life of a great city in modern times. Each of the departments of municipal administration, for example—police, education, public health, etc.—would in itself repay full treatment in a separate monograph, and there is much room for further work in these directions. Equally, changes in the physical appearance of the city, in regard to the disappearance of old buildings, would provide matter for much discussion. But within the limits of a single book, detailed treatment of these matters was not feasible; and ruthless elimination and concentration on a few major issues were found to be the only means of keeping the work within a reasonable compass.

In transliterations into English, the original form has been followed in the case of quotations, but elsewhere the forms of Burmese words employed in Harvey's History of Burma *have as a rule been used, as being the most convenient for the general reader.*

In the compilation of the book, I owe much to the help of Miss. L. M. Anstey of the India Office in supplying extracts from records; to Mr. J. W. Darwood for the use of photographs and maps; to Mr. Max L. Friedlander for the loan of photographs; to Mr. T. O. Morris for the use of a map; to U Set and the staff of the Rangoon Corporation for much assistance on points of detail; to the heads of commercial firms and other institutions who provided much valuable information; to the Rangoon University Library Committee for permission to reproduce illustrations from books in their possession; to the Trustees of the British Museum for permission to reproduce maps; to the Geography Department of *University College, Rangoon, for aid in cartography; to the staff of the American Baptist Mission Press for their care in printing and their patience in meeting my demands and in particular to the late Mr. H. W. Smith for his kind interest and assistance; and above all to my friends and colleagues Messrs. Furnivall, Luce, Cassim and Desai, for their unfailing aid and advice. Any merits which the book may possibly possess are theirs: the faults are my own.*

University College,
Rangoon.
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B. R. PEARN.

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CHAPTER ONE

HAGIOGRAPHY

RANGOON owes its history to two factors, the Shwe Dagon Pagoda and the River. The former made it a place of note in earlier ages; the latter has made it the chief port of Burma today.

Rangoon must have been a centre of religious life from very ancient days. The hill on which the Pagoda stands, rising high above the level flats of the Irrawaddy Delta, would be an obvious place for a shrine even in primitive ages; and probably the Hill was a place of worship centuries before the Buddhist era. Similarly the River, as a natural highway from the fertile hinterland of Burma to the sea, must long have been of economic importance. But the rivers of the Delta did not always flow in their present courses, and thus the economic importance of Rangoon itself in historic times is less than two hundred years old. Until the middle of the eighteenth century Rangoon was primarily a place of religious interest, the Shwe Dagon being its source of life.

By tradition, the Pagoda which gave Rangoon its fame owes its foundation to two brothers, Taphussa and Bhallika, merchants of the country of Ukkala, which is identified with the region lying between Rangoon and Twante. They, hearing of a famine in a western land, voyaged across the sea to India with a shipload of rice, and there were guided to the abode of the Buddha Gotama.

"On the seventh morning after the Buddha Gotama had stayed at the foot of the *linlun* [1] tree engaged in meditation, the two brothers Taphussa and Bhallika, merchants from Pokkharavatī town[2] in the Ukkalapa province of the land of Rāmañña,[3] came by with five hundred carts. A Nat who in a previous existence had been the mother of the two brothers caused the carts to stop. The two brothers made offerings to the Nat, who thereupon revealed herself to them, and told them that the Bodhisat had but now attained his Buddhahood and that he was residing at the foot of the *linlun* tree; and that if they desired to attain benefit for themselves they should approach the Buddha with offerings and make obeisance and pay homage to him. The two brothers were much rejoiced at these tidings, and approached the Buddha with cakes made from the honey of the bee. The Buddha's begging-bowl which Ghatīkāra Brahma had offered to him had disappeared

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[1] လင်းလွန်း — Buchanania latifolia.

[2] Often identified with Rangoon.

[3] The land of the Mons, i.e. Lower Burma.

at the time when he took the milk-food of Sujātā,[1] and the Buddha considered how to accept the cakes which the two brothers had brought. He perceived that the previous Buddhas had not received offerings of food in their hands but in a bowl; and he expressed desire for a bowl, whereupon the Four Nats from the Cātummahārājikā heavenly world[2] came down to earth and offered him four bowls made of sapphires. But these bowls the Buddha would not accept. Four other bowls, of common stone the colour of brown peas, were offered him, and these the Buddha accepted; and saying, 'Let these four bowls merge into one', he placed the bowls one upon the other and pressed them with his hands; whereupon all four bowls merged into one. Then the Buddha accepted the brothers' cakes in that bowl. And the Buddha gave to the brothers a handful of his hairs which he obtained by passing his hand over his head. When the brothers put the Hairs on their hands, the Hairs sent their brilliant rays throughout the length and breadth of the forests and the mountains; the earth trembled with a loud noise; the waves rose in the seas and oceans; the Meru mountain[3] bent its head in reverence; the Nats acclaimed, 'Thadhu, thadhu!'. The two brothers then sought permission from the Buddha to return to their own counry, and the Buddha, perceiving that the three preceding Buddhas had caused their Hairs to be enshrined in a pagoda on Singuttara hill in the country of these two brothers, bade them do likewise with his Hairs also. The two brothers reverently bade the Buddha farewell, joining their hands in adoration, and so departed. Sakka[4] created a big *prasada*[5] with a ruby pinnacle, and also a casket of emeralds. The hairs were placed in the casket, which was again placed within the *prasada*. Vissakamma[6] was summoned to decorate the whole route along which the five hundred carts of the two brothers were to go, and then the *prasada* was conveyed along the beautifully decorated way. Sakka accompanied them for seven days, and when they reached the sea-shore they went forth in a golden ship which Sakka had created. When they reached Ajettha city, the King of Ajettha, who knew that their journey should have taken seven months and that the two merchants had thus returned too soon, sent one of his ministers to enquire the reason. The cartmen of the five hundred carts told the minister that their speedy return was due to the haste with which they had travelled. When they were asked yet again why they had arrived back so soon, they said that as the journey was a dangerous one they did not waste

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[1] The daughter of *Senāni*, a landowner of *Senāni* village near Uruvela; offered a meal of milk-rice to the Buddha, the first he received after his attainment of Buddhahood.

[2] The inhabitants of the lowest *deva* world ruled by the *Cattāro Mahārājāno* (The Four Great Kings), guardians of the East, South, West, and North respectively. Their subjects are Gandhabbas, Kumbhaṇḍas, Nagas, and Yakkhas respectively. The Four Great Kings are the Recorders of the happenings in the Councils of the Gods.

[3] The centre of the world. On its summit is *Tāvatiṁsa, Sakka's* heavenly world; at the foot is the *Asura* world; and in the middle are the four *Mahādīpā* (Great Continents) surrounded by 2,000 smaller islands.

[4] Ruler of the *Tāvatiṁsa* heavenly world, the lowest but one of the lower heavenly planes; patron and devoted follower of Buddhism, and helper of good men in time of necessity.

[5] *Prasada — pyathat.*

[6] The architect of the Gods, an inhabitant of *Tāvatiṁsa*.

time on the way but made all speed. But the minister did not believe their words, and he enquired of the two brothers, who told him the truth. When the minister informed the King, he sent for the two brothers, Taphussa and Bhallika, and giving them many presents of great value he told them that he wished to pay homage to the Hairs. The two brothers brought forth the Hairs and showed them to the King, who was so rejoiced that he was about to cut off his own head that together with his crown it might be made an offering to the Hairs; but his Queen, intervening, begged him to offer the crown only, and this he did. Then, saying that his kingdom possessed nothing comparable to this, he asked the two brothers to leave two Hairs of the Buddha so that the whole kingdom might have them as objects of worship and reverence. But the brothers replied that they dared not part with even one of the Buddha's Hairs, for he had directed them that the Hairs must be enshrined in a pagoda on Singuttara hill in their own land. The King threatened that whether the brothers gave him the Hairs willingly or no, yet he would have at least two of them. So saying, he forcibly opened the emerald casket and took out two of the Buddha's Hairs, which he then enclosed in a big *prasada* before his palace. A gong was sounded throughout the city, inviting monks and laymen alike to come to pay homage to the sacred Hairs, and the King commenced a great festival in his city.

"Then the brothers continued their voyage, and after twenty-seven days they arrived at Cape Negrais, whence they sailed on until they arrived at Thayana mountain. The Hairs sent out six different rays, and even the night seemed broad daylight. Jeyyasena, King of the Nagas, who lived at the foot of the mountain, seeing this phenomenon and wishing to know its cause, at night transformed himself into the likeness of a human-being and went on board the ship. He found in the emerald casket the Buddha's Hairs, and having stolen two of them he returned to the Nagas' abode. At daybreak when the two brothers discovered their loss they beat their breasts, weeping bitterly; and hearing that there were Nagas in that place they departed thence forthwith.[1]

"Then they arrived at a place called Taungbwe, where lived a man who, having been shipwrecked, had been stranded there many years. This man came to the shore to beg food from the five hundred sailors, and he asked the brothers what goods they had brought with them. The brothers replied that they had brought merchandise for Nirvāṇa. The poor man came aboard the ship and offered his wearing apparel to the Hairs; and seeing that so poor and forlorn a man had offered all that he possessed, the five hundred sailors acclaimed, 'Thadhu, thadhu!'; their voices reached the world of the Nats and Brahmas: the Nats hailed 'Thadhu, thadhu!', and at that moment a *prasada* sprang from the ground, and the poor man

[1] According to other accounts, these stolen Hairs were ultimately enshrined in Ceylon (see, *e.g.* the *Shwe Dagon Inscriptions*).

made that *prasada* his home. All the five hundred sailors looked on this miracle with wonder and awe.

"The brothers departed from that place and came presently to Dhaññavatī city. Dhaññavatī city is now known as Khapin town[1]. There the Hairs were conveyed from the ship to the land and placed on a hillock of sand. For seven days the towns folk and the monks celebrated a great festival in honour of the Hairs. The two brothers told King Ukkalapa the whole story how they had come to lose four of the Hairs; they further said that they now offered the Hairs to the King, for there was no greater King in the world than he. The King summoned one of his ministers and told him to make preparations for a royal procession, for he was going to pay homage to the Hairs. His soldiers were assembled: cavalry, elephants, chariots were sent for: the infantry took their stations. A great and long procession was formed, the general of the army leading, the King and his household following. The King on his elephant went round and round the sand hillock in a clockwise direction, paying homage to the Hairs. Then said the King, 'If I am worthy to keep the Hairs under my care, let all the eight Hairs of the Buddha come together that I may see them all and pay homage.' Hardly had he uttered these words than the eight Hairs came together, and when the King opened the emerald casket he saw all the eight Hairs in it. The King was so rejoiced that he was about to cut off his head that it might be an offering, but the Queen begged him to refrain, and forcibly snatched the two-edged sword from his hands, saying to the King that if he were gone there would be none to care for the Hairs. The King said that the Queen spoke truth; and he took from his neck a necklace worth one lakh and offered it to the Hairs. Then the King said to the two brothers, 'You told me that there were only four Hairs, but now there are eight. How is this?' The brothers replied to the King, 'The Buddha knew of this beforehand, and instructed us that the Hairs must be enshrined in a pagoda on the Singuttara hill. The inherent power of the King has caused the Hairs which were lost to return to their proper place.' That King was much pleased with the brothers' words, and at once gave to them half his kingdom. Then the King caused all his subjects to search for the Singuttara hill; but search as they would they could not find it. The two brothers were much distressed, and they wept and wrung their hands in despair. Thereupon the earth shook and the Meru mountain bent its head. Sakka looked down from his abode in heaven, and, seeing what was happening on earth, sent for Vissakamma and told him to descend to the world of humans and clear the Singuttara hill of all forests and other improper things and to make the hill as flat as the surface of a drum. Vissakamma then asked the two brothers why they wept. Hardly had the two brothers told him why they wept than he had caused the whole of the Singuttara hill to be cleared of forests and trees and to be levelled so that its surface was as flat

[1] So the *Thamaing;* but Dhaññavatī is often identified with Arakan, and Khapin with Twante.

as that of a drum. Then he returned to his heavenly abode. That very night the two brothers dreamt. The elder brother in his dream saw a Brahmin come from the East with eight lotus flowers; the younger brother in his dream dived through the earth and held the earth in the palm of his hand. The younger brother interpreted the elder brother's vision of a Brahmin to mean that he would not live long, and interpreted the vision of the eight lotus flowers to mean that the eight Hairs of the Buddha would be successfully enclosed in their proper place. The elder brother interpreted the younger brother's dream to mean that the younger brother was going to perform a most meritorious deed and that all people would pay homage to him. Then they set out forthwith to find the Singuttara hill. At once they saw it. Then they went back to King Ukkalapa and told him what they had seen. The King said to them that there were four things in the world that men must not lightly offend, namely Monk, King, Fire and Cobra. Should one of these four be angered, the offender would be destroyed. Therefore the King asked the brothers to speak the truth. The brothers replied that in truth they had seen the Singuttara hill, and that the King need not doubt their word. The King then sent one of his messengers to go out to see this hill. The messenger saw the hill at once. He was rejoiced and said to himself that when he gave this marvellous news to the King, the King would reward him; and also that he himself, having seen the place where the Hairs of the preceding Buddhas were deposited, would obtain the Dhamma. So saying, he offered his wearing apparel to the Hill, and he prayed that, although in this existence he was slave to another, in all his future existences he might never again know slavery. Then he returned to the King and told him that he had seen the wonderful hill. Wherefore the King gave him many valuable presents and many villages. And the King, riding on his royal elephant, set forth, and going round the hill three times clockwise, paid homage to the hill together with his Queen. The King saw that the hill was surrounded by ninety-nine other hills, so that in all the number was exactly one hundred. The King saw also that to clear so vast an extent of all forests and trees would take a thousand years; and that to have cleared the place and made its surface as smooth as the surface of a drum within the space of one night must have been the work of Nats and Sakka. He told the brothers to bring the Buddha's Hairs to the hill that they might be kept there enclosed within a pagoda. But the brothers said that they had not yet told the King all that the Buddha had said to them. They said that the Buddha had directed that his Hairs must be placed in that spot where the relics of the three preceding Buddhas had been placed in the Singuttara hill. They asked the King to find some very aged man who could tell them where this place was. The King at once sent for a very aged man, but the aged man could not tell them what they wished to know, and they wept and wrung their hands in despair. This caused Sakka's carpet to become as hard as a rock; and

Sakka, knowing what had happened on earth, sent for Vissakamma and directed him to make preparation, saying that he would himself shortly descend to the earth. Vissakamma directed one of the Nats to make all the Nat armies ready, and also to create the Erāvaṇa elephant.[1] Sakka, surrounded by his Nat Soldiers and riding on the Erāvaṇa elephant, came down to the Singuttara hill. All the Brahmas also, with the exception of the Brahmas from the Arūpa Brahmā Heavens,[2] descended to the hill. When they came the whole universe was lighted úp and was visible, and all men were much rejoiced thereat. The two brothers asked Sakka to show them the place where the Hairs must be enshrined. Sakka could not enlighten them, saying that his age was but one thousand years, and that is equal to thirty-six millions of men's years. He sent for a Guardian Nat of the *thaphan* tree[3] who was older than he, but the Nat of the *thaphan* tree could not tell them what they desired to know. Sakka had to enquire of many Nats in his search for the needed knowledge. Sule Nat was the oldest of them, and then Yawhani Nat, Dekkhina Nat, and lastly Hmawbi Nat.

"Sule Nat was an ogre in the time of Kakusandha Buddha. He used to eat one elephant a day. One day he could not find an elephant, and while he was hunting for food he met the Buddha, whom he thought to eat. But the Buddha restrained him and asked him whether he did not know him. Sule Nat replied that he knew him not. The Buddha said that since he knew him not, he must be punished, and that the punishment would be that for seven years he must keep the five precepts. Sule Nat protested that seven years was too long; and the Buddha then prescribed seven months; but that also Sule Nat said was too long; wherefore the Buddha caused him to keep the five precepts for seven days only. From that time Sule Nat ceased to be an ogre and became the disciple of the Buddha, who gave him his water-dipper. The place at which he met Kakusandha Buddha was called Hmawbi. The place where Sule Nat lived was Kyaikkhami. The place where Sule Nat received the water-dipper was called Dagon.

"Yawhani Nat was an ogre in the time of Koṇāgamana Buddha, and he also became a disciple of the Buddha, losing his four tusks from his mouth. The Buddha gave him his bathing-garment. Dekkina Nat was likewise an ogre, in the time of Kassapa Buddha; later he too became the Buddha's disciple, having lost his four tusks. He received a staff. Amyitha Nat knew when Gotama became Buddha.

"Hmawbi Nat told Sakka that so long as the world endures he must watch over these relics of the four Buddhas: the water-dipper which Sule

[1] Sakkha's elephant, with thirty-three heads to accommodate the thirty-three gods of the *Tāvatiṁsa;* each head had seven tusks, each tusk carried seven lotus plants, each plant seven flowers, each flower had seven petals, on each of which danced seven fairies.

[2] Four of the twenty Brahma worlds, the highest of the celestial worlds; the inhabitants of the *Arūpa Brahmaloka* are so called because they are incorporeal (*Arūpa* — formless, incorporeal).

[3] သဖန်း — *ficus glomerata.*

Nat received from Kakusandha Buddha, the bathing-garment which Yawhani Nat received from Koṇāgamana Buddha, the staff which Dekkhina Nat received from Kassapa Buddha, and the eight Hairs which the brothers Taphussa and Bhallika received from Gotama Buddha. All these relics of the four Buddhas were safely kept on the Singuttara hill.

"All the men, Nats, and Brahmas were wonderstruck when they heard these marvels from the five Nats. Directed by Sakka, the Nats dug a cave, of length, breadth, and height, forty-four cubits. From within the cave which they dug, the water-dipper, the bathing-garment, and the staff were excavated. All rejoiced to see these relics of the three precedings Buddhas, and acclaimed, 'Thadhu, thadhu!'. Then Sakka caused to be brought from the Tāvatiṁsa Heaven six marble slabs, of which one slab was made the floor, four slabs were made the walls, and the sixth slab was made the roof. The thickness of each slab was one cubit. The cave was filled knee-deep with many various precious stones. Five golden jars with golden flowers were brought into the cave; one was placed in the middle and one in each of the four corners. On the top of the centre jar was placed a flower of jewels. On the top of the flower of jewels was placed a miniature of the golden ship in which the eight Hairs had been brought. On the top of the ship was placed the emerald casket. Figures of Sakka and his four Queens, of the two brothers and their wives and children, and of the Nats, were made and placed in the cave, in humble attitudes, bearing flags, candles, and streamers in their hands. The two brothers Taphussa and Bhallika carried the Hairs into the cave on their shoulders. The Hairs were carefully placed in a ruby casket, which was again placed within an emerald *prasada*, and the two brothers carried the *prasada* into the cave where the Hairs were to be finally kept. Sakka prepared to wash the Hairs with water; but the brothers said that the water from the Anotatta Lake,[1] the Ganges River, and the top of the Kelāsa Hill,[2] were not proper for this purpose; only water from the Singuttara hill might be used for washing the Hairs. Sakka caused a well to be dug on the Hill. Inside the well were found two small pits, one above the other. Forty-nine emerald pots were obtained from the well. Sakka caused forty-nine Nats to bring water from the well in the forty-nine emerald pots. When Sakka opened the ruby casket to take out the Hairs to be washed, the Hairs flew up to a height of seven palm trees, and rays of many colours emanated from them. The *Petas*[3] could see the men, and the men could see the ghosts. The blind recovered their sight. The dumb could speak. The crippled regained their strength. The earth and the waters shook. The Meru bent its head. The

[1] One of seven mythical lakes in the Himalayas; of special sanctity as the bathing-place of the Buddhas, Paccekabuddhas, Arahats, and Gods.

[2] A mountain range in the Himalayas; one of five ranges which stand around *Anotatta* lake, of silver colour; in Hindu mythology, the home of the Gods.

[3] Spirits of the departed; born in the *Petaloka* and leading a miserable existence as result of or punishment for former misdeeds.

seven ranges shook together. Sheet lightning and forked lightning played in the sky. A rain of jewels fell. Trees bore fruit and flowers bore blossom out of season. Nats and Brahmas and men moved among one another freely. Sakka's chief Queen, Sudhamma, offered flower-garments; the second Queen, Tusitā, offered ruby earrings; the third Queen, Sunnandā, offered jewels for the hair; the last Queen, Sujātā, offered her hair. King Ukkalapa and the two brothers Taphussa and Bhallika said, 'May we become Buddhas in some future age'. The Nats did reverence and acclaimed. The eight Hairs then descended on the heads of the two brothers. They came whirling down in circles like rings of fire. The size of a Hair was two fingers, but these fingers were Buddha's fingers and three times the size of the fingers of ordinary men. Then Sakka having washed the Hairs of the Buddha with the water from Singuttara hill, the Hairs were placed once more in the jewelled casket which was again placed on top of the miniature ship of gold in the manner aforesaid. Sakka created figures which were caused to go round and round the place where the Hairs were put, with glass two-edged swords on their shoulders, and at some distance from these figures were placed seven iron covers one upon the other.

"The two brothers Taphussa and Bhallika were very reluctant to part with the Hairs. Their eyes were fixed on them and they could not take their eyes away from the Hairs. When all was ready and the time came to place the stone slab over the cave, they broke into wailing cries and pitiful sobs, wringing their hands as in despair. The golden stone slab was placed on top of the cave by Sakka, and so the solemn rite was ended.

"On the golden stone slab was erected a golden pagoda, which was enclosed in a silver pagoda. Over this was built yet another, a tin pagoda. The tin pagoda was swallowed by a copper pagoda. This was enclosed in a lead pagoda. Then was superimposed a marble pagoda, and then an iron-brick pagoda. With golden bricks, silver bricks, *mogyo*[1] bricks, tin bricks, copper bricks, lead bricks, rock bricks, iron bricks, marble bricks, clay bricks, the pagodas were made; with lime, glue, mortar, plaster, the pagodas were well and firmly made."[2]

Such is the modern form of the story, told with variations of detail by different writers, of the foundation of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda; and so legend claims that the Pagoda dates from the days when the Buddha Gotama lived in this earthly existence twenty-four centuries ago; and the peculiar sanctity which attaches to the Pagoda is derived from the belief in the presence beneath it of the Buddha's sacred Hairs.

The historian, however, requires more than tradition to convince his sceptical mind, and to him are apparent good reasons for presuming to doubt this hallowed story.

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[1] *Mogyo* — alloy of copper and gold.
[2] *Shwe Dagon Thamaing Athit.*

In the ancient scriptures Taphussa and Bhallika are referred to, but little is said of them beyond the simple statement that they were disciples of the Buddha. "Taphussa and Bhallika were the chief attendants of the teacher Dīpaṅkara," says the *Buddhavaṁsa*. "Monks, supreme among my devout disciples who first took the refuge are the merchants Taphussa and Bhallika," is the statement in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*. Verses attributed to Bhallika appear also in the *Sutta Piṭaka*. The *Mahāvagga* of the *Vinaya Piṭaka* amplifies these meagre statements by saying that the two merchants came from Ukkala and that, advised by a spirit who had been a blood-relation of them, they approached the Buddha and offered him rice-cakes and honey-food, and that when Gotama sought a bowl in which to receive these gifts, the four Mahārājā Gods offered him four bowls from the four corners of the earth. But in none of these accounts is there any suggestion that the two brothers were connected with Burma, for Ukkala is the classical name of Orissa. Nor so far is there any mention of the gift of Hairs. It is not until the fifth century A. D. that the story of the Hairs first appears. The Pali commentator Buddhaghosa, writing at about that period, describes how the two brothers came from Ukkala, and were stopped on their journey by a spirit; this spirit, he states, was the mother of the brothers in a former existence; the brothers made their offering to the Buddha, but his bowl, which he had formerly had, had disappeared when Sujātā came to offer milk-rice; so the four Mahārājā Gods offered first sapphire bowls, which were refused, and then stone bowls the colour of beans, which the Buddha resolved into one bowl; after then accepting the offering of the two brothers, he stroked his head and gave to them the Hairs which adhered to his hand. Then the two brothers departed. Buddhaghosa also states that Taphussa and Bhallika were born at Haṁsavati, and were reborn at Asitañjana town; he adds also the detail that they had five hundred carts; and further that they deposited the Hairs in a golden casket and enshrined them at the gate of Asitañjana.

The commentator Dhammapāla, writing at the same period, also descibes the gift of Hairs. He adds that the brothers were born at Pokkharavatī town. Yet a third commentator, Buddhadatta, a contemporary of Buddhaghosa and Dhammapāla, though mentioning the brothers' gift of food, makes no mention of the Hairs. And while Buddhaghosa and Dhammapāla describe the presentation of the Hairs, they do not in any way indicate that Asitañjana where the Hairs were, according to Buddhaghosa, enshrined, was a town of Burma. Later commentaries on the scriptures tell the story of the Hairs also, but again make no suggestion of any connection with Burma.

It is not until the fifteenth century that the connection with Burma is intimated. This statement is made for the first time in the *Shwe Dagon Inscriptions*, made by order of King Dammazedi in 1485 A. D. There the story is told in greater detail, much as it is told today in the *Thamaing*, and

it is explicitly stated that the brothers were born at Asitañjana or Pokkharavatī, in Rāmañña, the land of the Mons, and that the Hairs were enshrined on Mount Tamagutta near their native town. Still more had yet to be added to the story by the later Mon chroniclers, such as the detail that Ukkala, which in the *Inscriptions* is clearly Orissa, was in truth in Lower Burma.

As has been observed, "We have here an interesting instance of the growth of legend to authenticate and add glory to local relics . . . . The ancient form of this legend, as found here, must have arisen when the relics were still in Orissa."[1] Thus the historian is compelled to regard the story as a product of the accretion of legend around a thin core of truth; to arrive at the truth the accretions must be eliminated, and when that is done the core of truth is found to have no reference at all to Burma[2]. For similar reasons the common story that Gotama himself visited Burma must also be rejected.

Much more in the traditional history of Dagon must be likewise cast aside. Legend has it that after thirty-two generations of rulers who paid homage to the Pagoda, the dynasty of Ukkalapa was overthrown, and that thereafter the Pagoda was allowed to fall into disrepair, until, at the time of the Third great Buddhist Synod, held at Pāṭaliputta in the year 241 B. C., the Pagoda was restored by no less a personage than the great Asoka. According to Mon tradition:

"There being no one to worship and do repairs to the Lagun shrine, it fell into ruins, and the place was covered with a growth of trees, bushes and creepers. King Asokadhammaraj of Rajagriha made a search for the place where the hairs were enshrined. It was at the time of the Third Council[1] two hundred and eighteen years after the Buddha's parinirvana that Asokadhammaraj made the search. The two saints Moggaliputta[3] and Uttara pointed out the place to him. None of the original shrines remained, all had perished. And King Asokadhammaraj had the place cleared of trees, bushes and creepers, and after building a shrine of golden *prasada*, he died."[4]

According to another account, however, it was not Asoka himself who was concerned in rediscovering the shrine, but two Buddhist missionaries. The Mon *Shwe Dagon Inscription* says:—

"The succession of those who knew the virtues of the hair-relics of the Lord Buddha having been broken, and since in this country of Mon the religion had not been established, there was none who knew the *ceti* of the hair-

[1] Rhys Davids: *Buddhist Birth Stories*, p. 118 note 3.

[2] On this subject see Pe Maung Tin, *Shwe Dagon Pagoda*, which work gives the only authoritative discussion of the subject and has been freely made use of above.

[3] Mahāmoggaliputtatissatthera, President of the Third Buddhist Council, held at Pāṭaliputta during Asoka's reign. The Pali chronicles mention his despatch of missionaries to the countries adjoining India.

[4] *Slapat Wañ Dhāt Kyuik Laguñ*, quoted Pe Maung Tin *op. cit.*

relics and none to worship and revere it. There being no one to worship and revere it, on the land of the *ceti* such things as trees, bushes, grass, rubbish had grown up and there was a forest concealing it, and no one knew the site. From the year that our Lord Buddha made parinirvana, 236 years having passed, our Lords the two Saints by name the theras Sona and Uttara[1] came and established the religion in the city of Suvaṇṇabhum.[2] And when, the religion having been established, there were monks and nuns, novices male and female, King Sirimāsoka said to our two Lords, 'Lords, the gem of the Law and the gem of the Order we are able to worship and revere. We wish to worship and revere the gem of the Buddha. We have it not. A relic of the Lord Buddha that we may satisfy our minds with, a gem of the Buddha that we may worship and revere, fetch for us the relic of the Buddha!' Thus the King made request to our Lords. Then our Lords the two mahatheras showed King Sirimāsoka the *ceti* of hair-relics of the Lord Buddha which Taphussa and Bhallika had enshrined on top of Mount Tamagutta and which the jungle, bushes and creepers had covered and concealed, and no one knew its site. Then King Sirimāsoka had the jungle, bushes and creepers cleared, and caused to be repaired the *ceti* and the *prasada* which was the *cetiyaghara*[3] and did worship. And in due course from that time also all the people dwelling in the Mon country kept coming and worshipping it".

The *Kalyāṇi Inscriptions*, inscribed at Pegu in 1475, also state that the Buddhist religion was brought to Burma at this time by Sona and Uttara.

Yet despite these legends, in none of Asoka's numerous inscriptions is there any reference to his visiting Burma or even to the despatch of missionaries there; while the suggested existence in Burma of a King called Sirimāsoka indicates that Aṣoka has in the course of the development of the Pagoda's story become transferred from India to Burma. These stories must also be rejected as the product of pious imagination.

But at the same time there is no doubt that the Delta had in distant times a close connection with India. In the early days of the Christian Era Hanthawaddy was, if Ptolemy is to be believed, inhabited by cannibals; but by the beginning of the third century Hindu colonies appeared along the coast, the colonists coming by sea from the east coast of India and also from the west coast, and establishing trading posts among the creeks and rivers of the Delta. It is likely that among these Hindu settlements was one on the Pagoda Hill, and that a Brahmanical shrine was erected there, replacing some primitive object of worship of the cannibals. Such shrines were erected commonly on the higher areas of ground, and the remains of them which are

[1] Two disciples of Mahāmoggaliputtatissatthera, sent by him to propagate the Buddhist faith.

[2] "The Golden Land," generally identified by Burmans with Lower Burma; but by western scholars with one of the islands of Farther India.

[3] The interior of a shrine containing holy relics.

found indicate the sites of Hindu settlements[1]. Some of them bore Sanskrit names from which their modern names have been derived. That the Pagoda Hill formed one of these settlements is, according to Forchhammer, indicated by the derivation of the name Dagon by which the place was known to the Mons and from which the Pagoda derives its title. This name has puzzled many travellers and scholars, and has led to some surprising efforts in etymology. One writer makes a gallant effort to connect the name with the idol Dagon of the Bible. The word, he says, is composed of "*dag*—fish, and the mysterious and sacred monosyllable *om, on, aum,* or *aun,* a title bestowed upon the sun but which appears, under its various forms, to imply divine existence. Dagon, therefore, is the Fish-God, the amphibious deity who was the chief object of Phoenician idolatry."[2] Forchhammer, however, states that the original name was *Singuttara;* but that the Pagoda Hill and two neighbouring hills, forming a complex of three hills, gave rise to the Sanskrit name *Trikumbhanagara,* or in Pali *Tikumbhanagara,* from the Sanskrit *kumbha,* meaning "a conical object;" in Mon, he says, *Tikumba* became *Tikun,* later *Takun,* or *Takoun,* and so *Dagon.*[3] The modern philologist of Burma, Pe Maung Tin, says that the place was called *Tribakumba,* and that *Tribakumba* developed into *Trikumba,* which was further corrupted to *Dagon* which still further changed into the modern Mon form *Lagun.* The name *Tribakumba* was given because, according to Mon legend, "three hilltops.....appear to bow down to Mount Siṁghuttara."[4] It thus appears that the name *Dagon* is in origin Sanskrit and that therefore the name was in the first place given by Hindu settlers of early days.

Contemporaneously with the form *Dagon,* which first appears in the later fifteenth century, when the *Kalyāṇi Inscriptions* give the form *dguṅ,* appears in the *Shwe Dagon Inscriptions* the name *Tambagutta* or *Tamagutta,* meaning "guarded by copper." This term, applied to the Hill, may refer to the story of the enshrining of the Hairs.

Mon tradition, however, has also a very different explanation of the name *Dagon,* connecting it with *dagoṅ,* "a tree or log lying across a road or stream," for when the tree above the place where the sacred relics were to be buried was felled, "as the three divisions of the mount were not equal, it remained poised horizontally on its centre on the highest peak; its top touched not the ground and its roots touched not the ground. Therefore the place was called in the Mon language *Dagon.*"

It appears probable, whatever the derivation of the name, that Dagon first became the scene of civilized life in the days of the Hindu colonists. In their time the general condition of the Hill and the surrounding country was doubtless much as it now is. Some slight changes have been effected by the

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[1] See Map No. 1.

[2] Conder: *Birmah, Siam and Anam.*

[3] Forchhammer: *The Shwe Dagon.*

[4] Pe Maung Tin, *op. cit.*

hand of man, such as the clearing of jungle and the building of houses and roads, and changes may have taken place in the courses of the neighbouring creeks, for some of the creeks and rivers of the Delta have at times altered their courses radically until in recent years natural developments have been restrained by man's efforts. But in general the topography of the district must have been what it was a hundred years ago. Stretching northwards from the Pagoda Hill ran the laterite ridge, the last phase of the Pegu Yoma; to the south of the Hill lay low-lying, often water-logged, land, where, forming a small island in the swamp, stood the laterite pinnacle which later came to bear the Sule Pagoda and on which doubtless a stupa was erected by the early settlers. To the east, beyond the swamps along the Pazundaung Creek, ran the Pegu River, on the far side of which rose the laterite ridge of Syriam; and to the west was jungly land sloping down to the River swamps, and across the River more swampy land until the Twante ridge was reached. In general the area had the form which it held until the last century, the Hill verged by low-lying, water-logged land, with the Hlaing or Rangoon River on west and south and the Pegu River on the east.[1]

Little evidence is available for the history of Dagon in the first millenium of the Christian Era, however. The Mon chronicle, the *Slapat Waṅ Dhāt Kyuik Laguṅ,* states that "King Tat Dabaung together with a host of soldiers came and thought he would dig up the hairs and take them away; but being unable to do so, he paid homage to the hairs and having planted on the south-east corner of the shrine an umbrella, with a handle of emerald and leaves of diamond stones as an offering, he returned home." The Mon *Slapat Rājāwaṅ Datow Smiṅ Roṅ* (*History of King*)[2] tells the same story with the addition that the King was deterred from his project by a great-storm. But King Tat Dabaung (Duttabaung) is a highly legendary figure whose

[1] The suggestion that in the early years of the Christian Era the condition of the Delta was radically different from its present condition and that as late as the seventh century the sea extended nearly to Prome, is not consistent with what is known of the Delta's development. The suggestion rests on poor evidence, that of the Chinese traveller Hsüan-tsang, who says only that Prome was a port near the sea. Hsüan-tsang did not himself visit Lower Burma and spoke entirely from hearsay. The accuracy of his information may be judged from the circumstance that he places Srī Kṣetṛa north-east of Chittagong. The reference to proximity to the sea thus carries little weight. Moreover, Prome could well be a port for the minute vessel of those days even if it stood as far from the sea as it does today, for as late as a hundred years ago ships of three and four hundred tons were being built at Prome (Cox: *Journal of a Residence in the Burmhan Empire*, pp. 25, 424). Further, since Prome is about two-hundred miles from the sea today, the Delta must, if it stood near the sea in the seventh century, have extended two hundred miles in thirteen hundred years — as average extension of two miles in thirteen years; and that is an incredible rate of growth. Rangoon is now some twenty miles from the mouth of the Rangoon River; if the Delta grows two miles in thirteen years, the town must have been only four or five miles from the sea a hundred years ago, whereas there is ample evidence that its distance from the River mouth was almost precisely what it is now. It is true that, as the Delta extends fan-wise the rate of extension seawards tends to decelerate owing to the increased area over which the same amount of silt is distributed; but, since the extension seawards in the last hundred years has been negligible, it follows that, to produce a total extension of two hundred miles since the seventh century, the rate of growth must have been positively enormous thirteen hundred years ago, running into miles a year. The improbability is such as to amount to an impossibility. The only reasonable conclusion is that, though there has been some progress seawards since the early centuries of the Christian Era, the progress has been relatively small, and that in those centuries the sea lay some considerable distance below Rangoon; the topography of Rangoon would thus have been at that period much what it was a hundred years ago before man made his changes in it. See Map I, which shows the old sea beaches and shore lines.

[2] *Trans.* R. Halliday.

very existence is open to doubt.[1] It may be, however, that the legend indicates warfare between the Mons at Dagon and the Pyu at Srī Kṣetṛa,[2] as the *History of Kings* records that King Tat Dabaung came from the latter city. Possibly the making of offerings by the King to the Pagoda indicates that the Pyu held the place for a time and restored or enlarged the stupa. But little dependance can be placed on the chronicles in their record of the history of these ancient times. In the same way the story that King Ponnarika, who reigned, it is said, in Pegu from 746 to 761 A.D., re-established the town and renamed it *Arammana,* though perhaps indicative of a struggle between Buddhism and Brahmanism, and representing a tradition of an attack by a Brahmanic King on Buddhist Dagon, must be regarded with all suspicion. Equally dubious is the story of the Mon chronicle *Prakui Rājathaput,* that the place was ruled by a King named Arammaṇaraja, who gave his name to the town which was thus called *Arammana* and later *Rammanagur;* for *Arammana* is simply a form of *Rāmañña,* "the land of the Mons."

The Mon *History of Kings* also states that "in the time of Mancesu, that monarch came marching down with intent to carry away the relics, and being unable to accomplish his object he formed a precious emerald into the likeness of an altar, and having buried it on the western side as an offering to the relics of the exalted Buddha, he went up to his own city." But this King, presumably some unnamed King of Pagan[3], is not identifiable, and the legend merely represents some ancient war of which no record is now extant. Little reliance can be placed in the legends which relate to those dim centuries, and until the conquest of the Delta by Pagan, and indeed for long after, the history of Dagon is little better than mere speculation.[4]

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Shwe Dagon Thamaing Athit (Rangoon 1924.)

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[1] Harvey: *History of Burma,* p. 309.

[2] Srī Kṣetṛa — Old Prome.

[3] ဇေယျသူရ — (*cesu* from Pali *Jeyyasūra*).

[4] The theory that in the year 1001 the King of Pegu sent presents to the Chinese Emperor and that one of his envoys was the governor of *Takuma* which is to be identified with Dagon (Gerini, p. 528) cannot be substantiated.

CHAPTER TWO

DAGON

IN the middle of the eleventh century Anawrahta, King of Pagan, extended his authority over Lower Burma. In so doing, it is said, he came to Dagon. The conquest of Thaton took place about 1054 or 1057 A.D., and the occupation of Dagon must have occurred, if it occurred at all, at about the same date. Mon tradition has it that he came to seize the Hairs:

"And King Nurahtaminsaw came down from Pagan and thought that he would dig up the relic-chamber and take away the Hairs. While fifty men with spades in their hands were digging, a terrific whirlwind arose, so that King Nawrahtaminsaw's soldiers and attendants were all frightened, and Nawrahtaminsaw, having offered golden and silver umbrellas and inserted on the north-east of the shrine a ruby of the kind found in Mount Vepulla, returned to Pagan[1]."

The Mon *History of Kings* tells exactly the same story[2].

But these chronicles are of late date and are of little value as evidence of the history of that remote age; and despite Mon traditions of Anawrahta's submission to the Hairs, it may be doubted whether he troubled even to visit Dagon at all, for there is no contemporary evidence of the event; and if he did come, he must have come as a conqueror, for from this period Governors of Hanthawaddy were, it seems, appointed from Pagan, three of them being named in the *History of Syriam,* and that Dagon could under these conditions have remained outside the royal power is not conceivable. It may further be doubted whether Dagon existed at all, for no good evidence of its existence can be found. If it did exist, it was certainly not a place of major importance in the Delta of those days, but was completely eclipsed by Dalla, so much so that Dagon is not even named in any of the inscriptions of the Pagan period that have so far been discovered. Dalla was the principal town in the Delta, and is referred to as *myo* or fortress. But this was not the Dalla of today; the Dalla of that period lay on the Twante ridge. There votive plaques inscribed with Anawrahta's name have been found; Dalla was the scene of the death of King Uzana; many other references to Dalla may be found in the inscriptions of the Pagan period; but not a single dependable reference to Dagon, unless, indeed, *Molaña,* which is casually referred to in an inscription of the year 1198 as a village "to the east of Dalla" can be identified with Dagon[3].

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[1] Pe Maung Tin *op. cit.* p. 57.

[2] *Trans.* R. Halliday.

[3] Pe Maung Tin and G. H. Luce: *Inscriptions of Burma.*

Dagon may have shared in the intercourse with Ceylon in the twelfth century and perhaps suffered in the Cingalese raid on the Delta in about the year 1180; but no evidence that Dagon was attacked is available and the suggestion is pure hypothesis. It is improbable, indeed, that Dagon was in that period a port; for there are trustworthy references to various ports in the Delta, such as *Pusim*, which may be identifiable with Bassein, and *Kusim*, which remains unidentified, but no reference to any port that can be identified with Dagon. In all probability Dagon was still in a condition of complete insignificance. The only evidence which might indicate that Dagon even existed is the recent discovery of a votive plaque of the Pagan period at Tadagale, to the north of Rangoon. It would be reasonable to conclude from this discovery that the laterite ridge at the end of which Dagon lay was the scene of activity in the age of Pagan; the ridge may well have provided the route for a road southwards to Dagon as it did centuries later and still does today. But as yet no such plaques have been found at Dagon itself, and though it is, of course, probable that a pagoda of some sort was in existence on the Pagoda Hill which provided so suitable a site, and though, in view of the discovery at Tadagale, it is possible that votive plaques of Pagan origin lie buried beneath the Shwe Dagon, no evidence is forthcoming. The very existence of Dagon, in the Pagan period is hypothesis, and it is not until after the fall of the Pagan dynasty that Dagon clearly emerges from the obscurity of the past.[1]

With the collapse of Pagan power in the later thirteenth century a separate kingdom of Lower Burma, with its capital at Martaban, appeared, and when in the middle of the fourteenth century the capital was moved to Pegu, Dagon became a place of some note, not, however, as a town or sea-port, but as a centre of religious life. Such evidence as there is from this period onwards, indicates clearly that such importance as Dagon had at any time was derived from the Pagoda. King Binnya U (1353-1385), it is said, came to Dagon and repaired the Pagoda, raising its height to 60 feet. "In the year 734," says the Mon *History of Kings*, "he was permitted to enlarge the pagoda of the Lagun hair relics. Having raised it to a height of forty standard cubits, he was permitted to maintain it all his days." Similarly it is recorded in the *Shwe Dagon Inscriptions*, which, erected only one hundred years after the date of the event, are fairly good evidence, that "Kings of faith ruling the country of Mon and intending to make the *cetiyaghara* permanent destroyed that *cetiyaghara* and encased the *ceti* so as to make it higher in successive stages and the *ceti* became the great *ceti*. The venerable *ceti* of the hair-relics of the Lord Buddha which Taphussa and Bhallika had enshrined on top of Mount Tamagutta, at the time when his Majesty the Lord of

[1] Burmese chronicles refer only casually to Dagon; *e.g.* in reference to the monk Uttarajiva, it is stated that his tutor was the pupil of "Shin Mahakala the elder, who dwelt in the town of Dagon." (*Glass Palace Chronicle*, V. p. 143). But there is no suggestion that it was a place of any note. The *Glass Palace Chronicle*, moreover, has little historical value, and its statements provide no valid proof that Dagon even existed. In any case, it is apparent that Burmese tradition, unlike Mon tradition, ascribes no importance to the place.

the White Elephants by name King Dhammatrailokyanātharājādhirat (Binnya U) was ruling, the *prasada* of *cetiyaghara* having been destroyed, he encased and increased and then it was forty cubits high".

It would thus appear that already there was a Pagoda at Dagon, but that it was of trifling size: a circumstance illustrative of the unimportance of Dagon at that time. Binnya U pulled it down so that a larger one might be erected; but again the limited height to which the King raised the new Pagoda is noteworthy; even his new Pagoda measured only forty cubits or sixty feet; previously, therefore, the Shwe Dagon could have been of but very insignificant size and could not have been a shrine of any note. While the rulers of Pagan had been erecting their magnificent temples, the Mons had produced nothing of comparable value, and even now in the days of their greatness their Kings had as yet aimed at no more than a stupa of sixty feet height. It is evident that the Delta had lagged far behind Upper Burma in civilisation; perhaps the Burmese conquest had been accompanied by something approaching a depopulation of the Delta and development had consequently been retarded. But from the time of Binnya U the Shwe Dagon Pagoda increases in size and Dagon becomes a place of more importance. Binnya U's sister, the Princess Mahadevi, was myosa of Dagon and made it her residence at times in this period. It was to Dagon that Binnya U's son, Binnya Nwe, afterwards the King Razadarit, fled when he ran away with his half-sister, Talamidaw. Binnya Nwe was pursued and captured, but though he was later pardoned for his offence, again he fled to Dagon to escape danger at the King's court at Pegu; for his aunt, the Princess Mahadevi plotted with Thamein Maru, who had married Binnya Nwe's sister, to kill both this sister and Binnya Nwe himself: whereafter the two were to marry and secure the succession of the throne to Thamein Maru. After several warnings Binnya Nwe with thirty followers fled once more to Dagon, and having come there he killed the servants of his aunt, and the inhabitants of the place submitted themselves to him. He had "the towers and the moat of the city" repaired, and asked for aid from his brother, the myosa of Dalla. He made his council chamber at the Athok Pagoda; and he paid reverence at the Shwe Dagon. His aunt made alliance against him with Laukpya, myosa of Myaungmya, to attack him when the rains ceased by water and by land, for "Dagon is no walled city but just a fort of logs; how will it be able to hold out?". But the Dalla myosa came to aid his brother, and so when the fighting began Binnya Nwe was victorious, and his enemies fled to Pegu. Binnya Nwe then occupied Pegu, and at that very time his father, Binnya U, died, and Binnya Nwe became King with the name of Razadarit. Thamein Maru fled to Martaban, but he was later captured and executed. Bearing in mind the gratitude which he owed his aunt, who had looked after him in childhood, Razadarit did not punish her but confirmed her in her myosaship of Dagon.

During his occupation of Dagon, Razadarit had been aided by certain Muslim seamen, doubtless some of the Arabs who traded across the Indian Ocean so freely in these days; and this would suggest that the River was now being frequented by foreign sailors who took their merchandise through the Delta creeks to Pegu.

When Razadarit ascended the throne in 1385, he neglected the Shwe Dagon, despite the fact that it had sheltered him in the days of his adversity. "Because he was great in war always, he had no opportunity to enshrine pagodas. He could only make offerings," says the *History of Kings*. For there was much warfare during his reign. Laukpya, the myosa of Myaungmya, induced Minkyiswasawke, King of Ava, to make war, promising to hold Pegu as a vassal state of Ava; and so began between the two kingdoms a conflict which, with varying fortunes, continued for many years. The forces of Minkyiswasawke invaded Pegu and, advancing down the Hlaing River, perhaps attacked, among other places, Dagon. The *Thamaing* asserts that he came to seize the Hairs: he "came with the intention of taking away the Hairs, but for the same reason (as in the case of Anawrahta) he had to abandon his design. He and his army stopped at the place where now Kemmendine stands. He said, 'From here we can see the whole of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda; so we will stop here.' Thus its name became and still is *Kyimyindaing*. The King made offerings to the Pagoda and returned to Ava." In so far as there is any reliance to be placed on this story, it would appear that the attack on Dagon failed, and that Minkyiswasawke, having camped a while by the riverside below the Hill, retreated; but other accounts suggest that the invaders did not come so far as Dagon and the story may be dismissed as legendary. However that be, the invasion of Pegu failed. But Laukpya was yet unsubdued, and again urged Minkyiswasawke to attack the Delta, suggesting that he come down the Panhlaing River against Hmawbi, Dagon, and Dalla, before attempting to take Pegu. But the invaders got no farther than Hmawbi; and while Laukpya waited at Panhlaing the Burmese army was defeated. Laukpya still held out, and much fighting ensued around Myaungmya, some of those who fell in battle being buried, it is said, on the platform of the Shwe Dagon. Ultimately Laukpya was defeated, but he was treated generously and was only made to "live beneath the Shwe Dagon Pagoda in the observance of religion," i.e., he was compelled to enter a monastery.[1]

On Razadarit's death his successor Binnyadammayaza (1423-1426) was opposed by two of his brothers, princes of Dagon and of Dalla, one of whom. afterwards King Binnyaran, held Dagon against him. Continual warfare occupied his brief reign, and he also "had no hand in enshrining the relics".[2] Yet the *Shwe Dagon Inscriptions* assert that King Sutasoma Rajadhirat,

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[1] *Razadarit Ayebon*, trans. J. S. Furnivall.

[2] *History of Kings*.

who must be either Razadarit or Binnyadammayaza, did in fact embellish the Pagoda: "he again caused it to be encased and increased. On its being encased and increased, he put up the spire, the umbrella, and with a layer of copper within and a layer of copper outside he had the whole spire fully overlaid." It may therefore be that when Binnyadammayaza for a time was at peace with his brothers he came to Dagon and commenced work which was not finished by the time of his murder.

Both the *History of Kings* and the *Inscriptions* refer to the embellishments made by Binnyadammayaza's brother and successor, Binnyaran (1426-1446). The former says that he "was great in his desire for works of merit. When his Majesty saw the pagoda of the eight hair relics, being desirous of increasing its size he thus considered: 'The measurement of the base is too large.' So with the architect his Majesty took cogitation. The hill itself was cut down, and the base having been built up in five stages, the pagoda was raised six standard cubits. The work was begun in the year 815, but there was not time to complete it then." The *Inscriptions* suggest that Binnyaran's work was necessitated by the collapse of the existing structure: "The venerable *ceti* of hair-relics, being the top part from the shoulder of the bell crumbled down. His Majesty with His Queen Nārājadevī sent Prince Sāṁm Mlām to level the ground and build it up again. After building it up, they had it plastered. Then saying that the *ceti* was too small, from the large plinth (upwards) they had it rebuilt and encased once more. Before the encasing of the *ceti* was finished His Majesty Rāmarājādhirāt went to the city of Gods". It would appear from these accounts that the ground space on the summit of the hill was too limited in extent to bear a pagoda of the size at which the King aimed, and that he therefore had the hill cut down and levelled so as to provide more room; but that the work was not completed at the time of his death.

His successor, King Binnyawaru (1446-1450) carried on the work. "There never was any king among all the kings who reigned in Haṁsāvatī that did such good deeds as this king did. He took great delight in the three gems. He did much in keeping up and preserving the pagoda relic chambers. As to the Lagun hair relic pagoda, from the five terraces of the base which had not been completed, he built up again until the bell was finished. This king because he greatly desired the good of the people for many a day, managed only to repair the Lagun pagoda as far as the bell".[1] The *Inscriptions* similarly state that the King was unable to complete his design before his death, but had to leave the completion of it to his successor. This successor, King Binnyakyan (1450-1453,) also "greatly delighted in works of merit. As to the Lagun pagoda which was not yet finished, from the bell he built it up to a finish at the umbrella and put on its crown." The *Inscriptions*, however, suggest that it was the King's mother who completed the

[1] *Ibid.*

work, the King merely having the Pagoda plastered and setting up the spire and the Umbrella.

When Binnyakyan died, there was no obvious successor. For a brief spell King Mawdaw, cousin of Binnyakyan held the throne; "this king during his reign showed a very cruel disposition. He was an adulterer. He reigned for seven months only."[1]

It was evidently during these years of the Mon kingdom of Pegu that the Shwe Dagon first began to assume its importance as a place of religious veneration. While tradition may exaggerate the glories with which it was endowed, there can be no doubt that it was rapidly gaining in size and in fame. Before the time of Binnya U it had been a very minor shrine; the Pegu kings began to build it up, increasing both its height and its importance. No reason is advanced in the chronicles for the development of the Pagoda. Possibly some change in the courses of the Delta creeks had increased the importance of the River and by attracting trade to the neighbourhood had made the town of Dagon more populous. But the more probable explanation is that Dagon had a tendency to become a Cave of Adullam for rebellious princes and for this reason it was perhaps desirable to make clear the royal interest in the place and to provide a pretext for frequent visits.

It was in the time of Mawdaw's successor that the Shwe Dagon first assumed something of its present appearance. His successor was the famous queen Shinsawbu, who also is known as Srītribhūwanādityaparavara-dhammatrailokyanātha Mahādhammarājādhirājadevī and is the only queen-regnant in the history of all the Burmese kingdoms. Born in 1395, she was a daughter of Razadarit. She was married in 1415 to Binnyabwe, a nephew of Razadarit, but during the troubles of Binnyadammaraza's reign, when Thihathu, King of Ava, invaded Pegu to assist the rebels, she was given in marriage to Thihathu by one of her brothers, the rebel Lord of Dalla, afterwards King Binnyaran. At that time she was a widow with a son and two daughters. She was taken to Ava and became Thihathu's chief Queen; but on his death in 1426 she was given to the myosa of Pagan. A succeeding King of Ava, Mohnyinthado, took her from the myosa; but finding her condition intolerable she fled from Ava in 1430, in the company of two Mon monks who had been her teachers. Going by boat, she escaped down the river and eventually came to Pegu, after an absence of seven years. Binnyaran sent her to Dagon to live. It was her son who became King of Pegu in 1446 as King Binnyawaru. After Mawdaw's death there was no male representative of the house of Razadarit left, and Shinsawbu was accepted as queen-regnant.[2]

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[1] *History of Kings.*

[2] For the history of Shin Sawbu see Harvey: *History of Burma,* and Saya Thein: *Shin Sawbu.* The dates are uncertain.

Two claims to fame are hers: one, that she ruled well, so much so that "four hundred years later the Talaings could think of no fairer thing to say of Queen Victoria than to call her Shinsawbu reincarnate;[1] the other, that she embellished the Shwe Dagon.

There was a great contrast between her rule and that of her predecessor; the *History of Kings* says of her that, "She was held in much honour. She was great in faith and self-sacrifice. Kings of the eight directions sent messengers with presents without intermission. She accomplished a great many meritorious works, first in regard to pagodas great and small, and also in respect to monks who have undertaken the burden of study and the burden of contemplation. She built many monasteries and made them over to the monks. She made offerings without number all the time."

After seven years she resolved to abandon the throne. She decided that one of the two monks who had accompanied her from Ava should be her successor, and this man, renouncing the yellow robe, became the Einshemin with the name of Dammazedi, and married one of the Queen's daughters. Leaving her son-in-law in charge of the government, she came to Dagon. "When her Majesty Bañā Thau had reigned in Haṁsāvatī seven years, she handed over the government to the monk Dhammacetī, who was viceroy. Then her Majesty Bañā Thau went away down to Lagun. She had them build and enlarge the Lagun Pagoda platform. Her Majesty also put on a crown. Her Majesty went on the scales and made them take her own weight in gold, twenty-five viss[2], and beating it out into leaf, cover the pagoda from the dome to the umbrella and down to the bottom. For the city of Lagun they made up five thousand viss of pure bronze and offered it to the pagoda. Four chiefs of pagoda slaves, four soldiers and five hundred people were placed, and they all gave service to the Lagun pagoda. She had them cast a bronze bell of one thousand seven hundred viss weight. She had them pave the Lagun pagoda platform with paving stones. Stone posts were put all round the pagoda, and stone lamps were put all round. There were four white umbrellas, four golden alms bowls, eight golden curry dishes, four golden spoons, four earthenware vessels, and four offerings were made each day. There were twenty-seven men who prepared the lamps each day. There were twenty men as guardians of the pagoda treasury. There were four goldsmiths' shops, four orchestras, four drums, four sheds, eight door-keepers, four sweepers, and twenty lamp-lighters. She built round and strengthened the sevenfold wall. Between the walls her Majesty Bañā Thaū had them plant palmyra palms and cocoanut trees. So she adorned the place. In this fashion she arranged for the upkeep of the Lagun hair relics."[3] The *Shwe Dagon Inscriptions* give a similar statement,

[1] Harvey, *op. cit.*, 117.

[2] About 90 lb.

[3] *History of Kings.*

except that Dammazedi is joined with Shinsawbu in this pious work: "The two sovereigns, mother and son, stayed at the foot of the hair-relics and had the ravine filled up. Even the very deep ravine they caused to be entirely filled up. High mounds they caused to be dug and levelled. On the earth which was filled in were ranged in order blocks of gravel stone and outside of it they had it all faced. Then on the first plinth supporting the *ceti,* at the mouth of the upper plinth they arranged stone umbrellas overlaid with gold. Between the umbrellas they had the foot of the plinth of the *ceti* covered full with the flat stones. And on the foot of the plinth, having built up the bell, they arranged standing lanterns adorned with stones. On the top of the *Cetiyangana*[1] what is termed a *pannasa*[2] for people to walk round, and round about the umbrellas they laid down flat stones throughout. At the end of the *pannasa* they built a wall, with an earthwork, on which they made patterns of lotus . . . at the end of one storey of the lower level they had permanent rest-houses built all round. On that level they built the *pannasa* on one storey and on the next storey of the lower level they had a wall built all round it. Within the wall they had cocoanut palms planted throughout. Outside the wall they had the ground levelled throughout." And again, the *History of Syriam*: "She repaired the pagoda and the hall of ordination and the flagstaff. She overlaid it from the pinnacle right down to the plinth with scroll work and tracery of gold of four times her own weight. She also bestowed five thousand pieces of silver upon the inhabitants of the towns and villages within the sacred lands. Moreover she set up as a further benevolence four companies of watchmen, one on each of the four sides of the pagoda, five hundred men with four head astrologers, two writers and sitke. Further she appointed a headman over the gold work and a headman over the wood oil, and a headman over the plaster work, a writer for the gold, and a land measurer, fourteen men to present the offering of food, twenty-seven to light the lamps, five men as a watch to patrol each face, ten men to keep watch over the treasury, four ushers, eight doorkeepers and four wood carvers, in all one thousand and six men, and four sets of Talaing drums and four of Kala drums, four golden alms-bowls for the royal use, four pieces of gold lace, four tiers of the pagoda and seven flagstaffs. These are the boundaries of the lands which she dedicated to the Shwe Dagon Pagoda: on the east Kyaikkanat pagoda, on the south Danok pagoda, on the west Pyaung Bya pagoda, on the north Moyeik Modaw Pagoda: these lands are marked out and dedicated."[3]

Thus what Shinsawbu did was to fill in the nullahs in the sides of the Hill, and to cut the Hill into terraces; the Hill has to this day the appearance of being a partially artificial erection. The topmost terrace she had paved with stone, and a stone wall was built around. She was the first to gild

[1] *Cetiyangana* — the precincts of the *ceti.*
[2] *Pannasa* — a leaf-hut.
[3] See Appendix A: *The Glebe Lands of the Shwe Dagon.*

the Pagoda, for there is no previous reference to gilding in its history. To the Pagoda she dedicated slaves and land. For her residence during the building of the Pagoda she had a stockaded palace erected near the Pagoda, and there is a tradition that the remains of the stockade are still visible in the earthworks on the golf-course between the Pagoda and Prome Road.[1] The hillock which formerly stood west of Voyle Road, to the north-west of the Pagoda and which was levelled in 1936-37, was known as Shin Sawbu Gon.

According to the tradition she spent some years at Dagon engaged in her task, and thereafter resumed her government till her death ten years later. Her death took place at Dagon: "There came a day when her Majesty Bañā Thau grew sick, and wishing to contemplate the Lagun Hair relics which glowed and glistened, she opened her eyes and having attained tranquillity, she passed away and returned to the devalokas."[2] It would thus seem that she was brought to Dagon to look once more on the gleaming Pagoda which she had adorned, and that having seen it she died. She is said to lie buried at the pagoda still known as Shinsawbu's cemetery near the kyaung on Windsor Road. It is said that among her other works of merit she enlarged the Sule Pagoda, which according to legend was originally built at the same time as the Shwe Dagon to commemorate the spot where King Ukkalapa and the two brothers assembled while searching for Singuttara hill. Actually, however, the term *Sule* appears to be derived from *cūḷaceti* "the small pagoda," in contradistinction to the great pagoda of Shwe Dagon.[3]

On Shinsawbu's death in 1472 she was succeeded by her son-in-law, Dammazedi. He also was pious, and his chief contribution to religion was the sending of a mission of twenty-two monks to Ceylon in 1475. Having made offerings to the Tooth at Kandy and to other objects of veneration, and having presented gifts to the Cingalese clergy and the King of Ceylon, these monks obtained ordination from the monks of the Mahavihara, and after their return they transmitted these orders to the monks of Pegu. At Pegu Dammazedi erected inscription-stones relating the story of these events, the Kalyāṇi Stones, so called from the Kalyāṇi *thein* at Pegu where the new ordinations were made: the *thein* itself deriving its name from the Kalyāṇi stream in Ceylon on whose banks the Cingalese monks ordained the King's mission. But he reduced the gift of land which Shin Sawbu had made to the Pagoda, though he erected the *Inscriptions* telling the legend of the foundation of the Pagoda and also gave some compensation in the shape of gold:

"In the year 832 after the death of the princess Pinya Daw, during the reign of Dhammazedi, because the lands that Pinya Daw had formerly dedicated were too broad, he reduced them to a small compass. Thereafter the sacred lands extended on the North-East so far as the Thit Thin Kan Hill, on the East so far as Nga Mo Yeik Chaung, on the South-East so far as

[1] But see below p.
[2] *History of Kings.*
[3] Forchhammer: *The First Buddhist Mission to Suvannabhumi.*

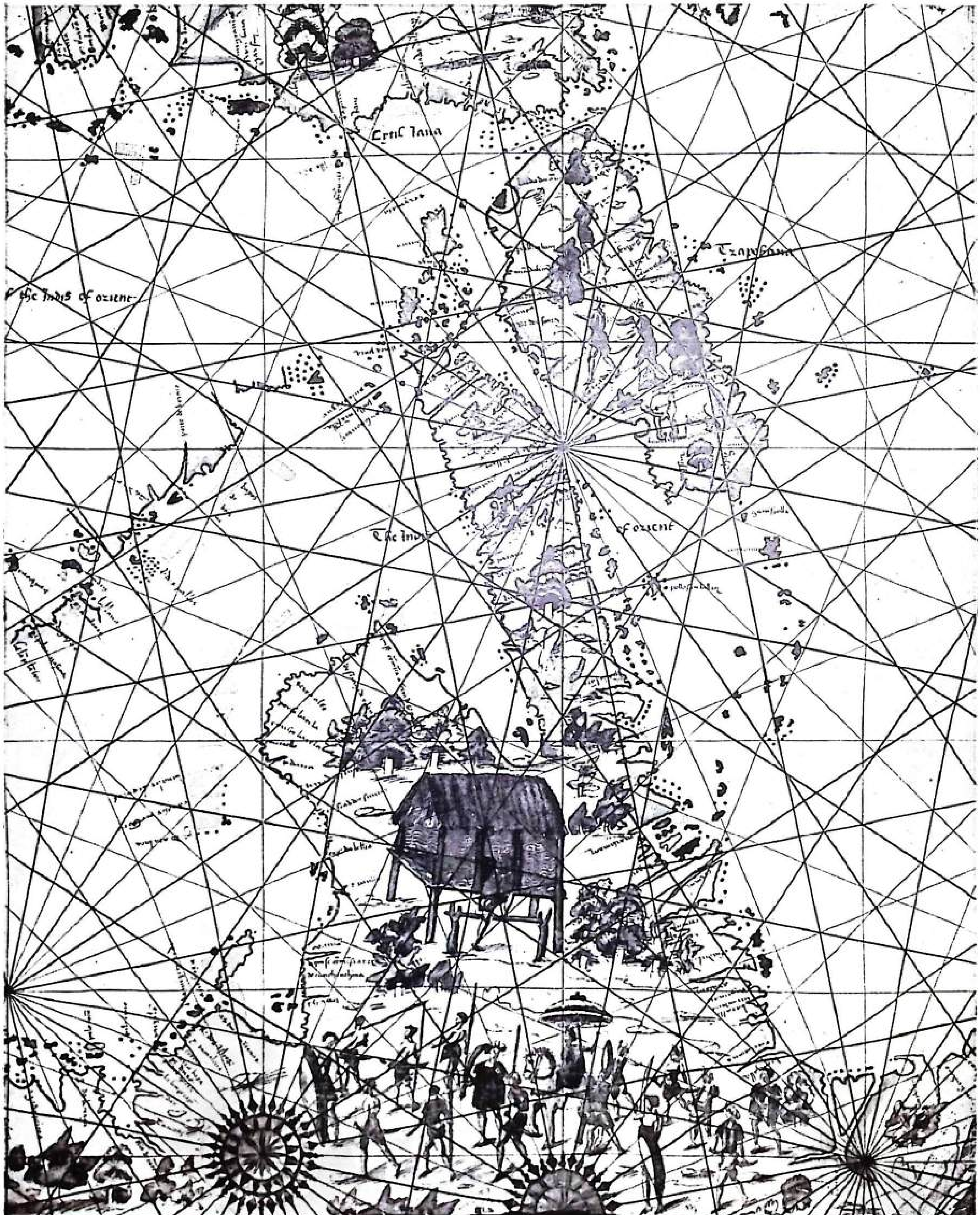
the Pan Alwe chaung and the mouth of the Nga Mo Yeik; on the South at the Tonbo landing stage the venerable Dagon was contiguous with the lands of Dalla; on the South-West the Kangyi watch-post; on the West the Kemmendine watch-post and the Inwa Bauk chaung; on the North-West the mouth of Hmawbi chaung; on the North from Nga Than Tin village so far as Yongalauk chaung; because he thus reduced the compass of the lands, Dhammazedi measured his weight and the weight of the queen in gold and with four times their weight of gold he overlaid the pagoda with scroll work and tracery. He also cast a large bell 'Awinga Sauk' of three parts brass, eighteen thousand in weight, and dedicated it."[1]

The *History of Kings* mentions his gifts but does not refer to his expropriation of the Pagoda lands: "Then his Majesty went down to Lagun to perform meritorious works. He had the heir-apparent and the queen go on the scales, and gave their weight in gold to be beaten out into gold-leaf the size of a wall, and had the Lagun pagoda covered over. His Majesty had them design and cast a great bell of one hundred and eighty thousand viss weight of bronze. The mouth of the bell was eight cubits, and its height twelve cubits. He cast also a small bell of five hundred viss weight to strike in offering to the Buddha, on the upper platform of the pagoda. They paid up in Lagun as the contribution of the Lagun people five viss of gold and five thousand viss of bronze. Because it was the city of the Buddha they were obliged to eat fruits and vegetables. His Majesty gave this standing order to the governor of Lagun: "When it comes to the end of Lent, let twenty-five trees of *kalpavṛiksa* flowers be brought to the pagoda every year." Thus began the practice of making annual royal offerings to the Pagoda, a practice carried on by later Kings. It is to be noted that the inhabitants of Dagon were constrained to vegetarianism, as became subjects of a true Buddhist.

Dagon was the place at which Dammazedi desired to receive the monks on their return from Ceylon. "When Rāmādhipatirāja received the tidings that the *thēras* has arrived at the mouth of the Yoga River[2], he bethought himself: 'Considering that these *thēras* visited Sīhaladīpa[3] at my solicitation, and that they are the inaugurators of the *upasampadā* ordination[4], it would not be proper to send any of my officials to welcome them. It would, indeed, be appropriate that I should myself welcome them on my return from Tigumpanagara where, on the *mahāpavāraṇa*[5] day, which falls on the full-moon day of Assayuja, I shall present the *cetiya*[6] containing the Hair Relics of the Fully Enlightened One, obtained during His life-time, with a large bell made of brass, weighing 3,000 *tolas*'.[7] Agreeably with this thought, he

[1] *History of Syriam*, trans. J. S. Furnivall. See also Appendix A: *The Glebe Lands of the Shwe Dagon.*
[2] Taw Sein Ko (*Indian Antiquary* XXII) suggests the Pegu River, but Blagden (*Epigraphia Birmanica* III) prefers the Bassein River.
[3] Ceylon, the country of the Sīhalas (Cingalese).
[4] The higher ordination or admission to the full privileges of recognized monkhood.
[5] An ecclesiatical ceremony performed at the end of the Buddhist Lent.
[6] Shrine.
[7] Taw Sein Ko (*op. cit.*) interprets as 120,000 viss; Blagden gives 3,000 viss.

MAP No. II



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ROTZ: BOKE OF YDROGRAPHIE (1542)

wrote a letter saying: 'As I am visiting Tigumpanagara, may it please the Venerable Ones to remain in that town?' And, after making arrangements for their entertainment, he had them disembarked from their sea-going vessel and conveyed to Tigumpanagara in river-boats......On Thursday, the 8th day of the light half of the month Assayuja, 838,[1] Sakkarāj, Rāmādhipatimahārāja, with the object of presenting a great bell to the Kesadhātucetiya,[2] embarked on a barge surmounted by a golden spire, and, escorted by a number of boats, headed by golen boats such as the indavimāma, proceeded to Tigumpanagara. On Tuesday the 13th day of the light half of the month Assayuja, the day of his arrival at Tigumpanagara, he invited the eleven *thēras*, who embarked in the same ship at Rāmadūta, and served them with various kinds of delicious food. He likewise presented each of them with two couples of cloths for their *ticīvara* robes,[3] and having exchanged with them the customary compliments of friendship and civility, commanded that their residence be shown to them. Rāmādhipatimahārāja had grand festivals held for three days; and on Thursday, the day of *mahāpavāraṇā*, the great bell was conveyed to the quadrangle of the Kesadhātucetiya, in order that it might be presented to it. On Friday, the 1st day,[4] offerings were made to the priests residing in Tigumpanagara, and the King commanded that largess be given to paupers, wayfarers, and beggars. On Sunday, the 3rd day,[5] eleven boats were adorned in a reverent manner, and ministers were sent to escort the *thēras*. Having thus made preparations for escorting the *thēras*, Rāmādhipatiraja left Tigumpanagara on the morning of Monday, the fourth day".[6]

As a corollary of the institution of the new orders, Dammazedi caused the reconsecration of *theins* (or ordination sites) throughout his kingdom, and the list of reconsecrations at Dagon indicates the number of *theins* that existed there in his day, *viz.*, "the Ma Damru *simā*, the Mah Dun *simā*, the Rak *simā*, the Duiw Canlan *simā*, the Pubbārām *simā*, the Kyāk Ma Sāṁ Kyow *simā*, the Duiw Panah *simā* the Goh Dhammārām *simā*, the Tak Naṅ *simā*, the Lambāt *simā*, the Apa Gay *simā* the Kyăk Gnak *simā*, the Nelu Laṅ *simā*, the Dȧṅ Luin *simā*, the Pāṅ Taboṅ *simā*, the Twān Akhwin *simā*, the Balā *simā* the Daroṅ Sā *simā*, the Maṅga *simā*, the Kruṅ Cra *simā*, the Cambuiṅ *simā*, the Duiw Khaweṅ *simā*"[7]. As would be expected, the *theins* around the great Pagoda were numerous.

If the accounts in the *History of Kings* of the offering of precious metals by the people of Dagon are to believed, the place must by now have become a large and wealthy town, but from later descriptions this appears improb-

[1] 26th September, 1476.

[2] "The shrine of the hair-relics"—*i.e.* the Shwe Dagon.

[3] The three robes of a Buddhist monk: *Saṅghāṭi*, the cloak, *Uttarāsaṅga*, the upper robe, and *Antaravāsaka*, the inner garment.

[4] 4th October, 1476.

[5] 6th October, 1476.

[6] *Kalyani Inscriptions*, trans. Taw Sein Ko.

[7] Blagden: *Epigraphia Birmanica*, III. p. 270

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able. Nevertheless, this period has been described as "the golden age of Lower Burma",[1] and though Dagon itself was a small town, pious men from other parts of the Delta may well have been in a position to make generous gifts to the Pagoda.

But it did not last. Before long Upper Burma had asserted its superiority and a long series of wars brought down the Mon power in ruin. Dammazedi was succeeded by his son Binnyaram (1492-1526), and during his time "a great storm arose and the Umbrella of the Lagun pagoda floated away on the air and fell down as far away as Syriam. His Majesty Bañā Rām lifted and brought up the Umbrella and the crown, and having set them round with many precious stones, put them upon the dome of the Lagun pagoda. When His Majesty reached the age of forty-eight, he built forty-eight little pagodas on the base. He again enlarged the great base, and made offerings in golden alms-bowls with golden litters every day and had eight men hang a golden bell as an offering."[2] According to modern belief as recorded in the *Shwe Dagon Thamaing* this episode was the work of the Nats who thus indicated the evil of the King's rule and so led him to better ways: "He was a bad King and committed many evil deeds. In his reign epidemic diseases came; famine visited the land; Nats stood in the sky and abused him; fearful storms arose; heavy rains fell, accompanied by thunder; many deaths occurred; people cursed the King; Nats cursed the King. The Umbrella from the Shwe Dagon Pagoda was blown off by one gust of wind coming with terrible force and it fell down on the ground some two miles to the north-west of the Pagoda. This evil portent changed everything. The King, his ministers, and all his subjects, were affrighted, and thereafter devoted themselves to religious practices such as making offerings, going to the pagoda, building pagodas and monasteries, digging wells and tanks, approaching sanghas and keeping the precepts. They also indulged in harmless amusements so as to forget the unhappy times, holding *pwes* and festivals all the year round. At the place where the Umbrella of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda fell, the King held a great festival; and he repaired the Umbrella and replaced it on the Pagoda. At that time the king's age was forty-eight years, and therefore he built forty-eight small pagodas around the Shwe Dagon Pagoda. In the same year the King died."

He was succeeded by his son Takayutpi, who also adorned the Shwe Dagon; "for the hair relic pagoda he made a consecrated chain of stones, and put it on the dome of the pagoda. His Majesty gave as an offering to the pagoda a royal tusker elephant, with two young ones, a silver alms-bowl, and eight men."[2]

But in 1535 Tabinshwehti, Lord of Toungoo, attacked Lower Burma; he took Pegu in 1539, and Takayutpi fled to Prome and died within a few months. So ended the independent Kingdom of Pegu; for two hundred years

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[1] Harvey, *op. cit.* p. 121.
[2] *History of Kings.*

thereafter Lower Burma remained subject to Upper Burma. It is significant that Tabinshwehti was opposed in his attack on Pegu by certain Portuguese sailors who happened to be there, and that Portuguese adventurers figure in much of the warfare which accompanied the subjugation of Lower Burma. The fall of the Mon Kingdom synchronised with the beginning of a new age, the age of European adventurers in Burma; and from this time the somewhat slender evidence of Mon chronicles and inscriptions for the history of Dagon is supplemented by the accounts of European travellers.

The first European traveller to visit Burma so far as is known was the Venetian merchant Nicolo di Conti, who came to Tenasserim, Arakan, Ava, and Pegu, about 1435; but he makes no reference to Dagon in his description of Pegu. Another Italian, Hieronimo de Santo Stephano, came to Pegu in 1496, and nine years later another fellow-countryman, Ludovico di Varthema also came there; but neither do these refer to Dagon in their accounts of their adventures. It is therefore not unreasonable to conclude that though Dagon had become an eminent religious centre, it was in other respects still insignificant, and not in any way a place likely to interest the commercially-minded. In the second decade of the sixteenth century the Portuguese began to have official relations with Lower Burma, and a Portuguese settlement was established at Martaban. But Pegu was the principal centre of trade, for Pegu was in those days an important port. The Pegu River did not, as now, flow towards the sea past Syriam: on the contrary it flowed into the Gulf of Martaban, and this remained the case till the later sixteenth century.[1] It was to Pegu that foreign merchants went in pursuit of their trade, and not even Syriam, much less Dagon, was as yet within the range of commercial interests. As Dammazedi's reception there of his monks shows, Dagon was not yet a sea-port, for it was reached from the sea by river-boats. In the later sixteenth century, however, travellers do on occasion refer to Dagon: thus Ramusio, in his *Delle Navigationi et Viaggi,* dated 1563, mentions "Dogom" as a "port", though this may mean no more than that trading barges came there from Pegu and other greater towns: and in describing the distances from Pegu to the major towns he mentions Dagon as one day and one night's journey away. But it is Gasparo Balbi, who came there in 1583, to whom we owe the first detailed description of ancient Dagon.

On the 2nd November of the year 1583, he says, he reached the city of Dalla (i.e., Twante), where there were "ten large rooms full of elephants; which are kept there by divers servants of the King of Pegu. The day following we came to the faire citie of Dogon, it is finely seated, and fronted towards the South-West, and where they land are twenty long steps, as from the Pillar of Saint Marke to the Strawbridge, the matter of them is strong and great pieces of timber, and there are great currents of water both at ebbe and floud, because it is a place neere Maccareo,[2] which entereth and goeth

[1] See Map. I., which indicates the old course of the Pegu River.

[2] *Maccareo* — a tidal bore.

out of the mouth of Sirian, which is a sea-port; and alwaies when the water encreaseth, they goe upon the Staires; and when it is ebbe, it discovers all about, and makes it a great way drie land. On both sides the River, at the end of the banke, or at the staires, is a wooden Tigre, very great, and painted after the natural colour of a Tigre;[1] and there are two others in the midst of the staires, so farre from one another, that they seeme to share the staires equally....They told me a foolish belief which they have, that they stand there to guard, for if any should be so bold to displease the Pagod, those Tigres should defend him, for he would give them life. After we were landed we began to goe on the right hand in a large street about fifty paces broad, in which we saw wooden houses gilded, and adorned with delicate gardens after their custome, wherein the Talapoins, which are their Friers, dwell, and looke to the Pagod, or Varella of Dogon. The left side is furnished with Portals and Shops, very like the new Procuration at Venice; and by this street they goe towards the Varella, for the space of a good mile straight forwards, either under paint houses, or in the open street, which is free to walke in. When we came to the Varella, we found a paire of steps of ninety steps, as long in my judgment as the channel of the Rialto at Venice. At the foot of the first staire are two Tigres, one at the right hand, and the other the left, they are of stone, and stand in the same fashion that they do at the shoare-side....On the last step are Angels of stone, each with three Crowns one upon the other; . . they have the right hand lifted up, ready to give the benediction, with two fingers stretched out. The other hand of the one is layed upon the head of a Childe, and of the other upon the head of an Ape; those statues are all of stone. At the right hand is a Varella gilded in a round forme, made of stone, and as much in compasse as the street before the Venetian Palace, if it were round: and the height may equal Saint Markes Bell-tower, not the top of it, but the little Pinnaces. At the left hand is a faire Hall carved and gilded within and without. And this is a place of devotion, whither the people goe to hear the Talapois preach; the streete is greater than Saint Markes, at the least larger. And this is a place of great devotion amongst them, and yearly multitudes of people come by Sea and by Land. And when they celebrate a solemn Feast, the King in person goeth before them all, and with him the Queens, the Prince, and his other sonnes, with a great traine of Nobles and others, who goe to get a pardon. And on this day there is a great Mart where are all sorts of merchandises which are current in those Countries, which they frequent in great multitudes, which come thither not so much for devotion as traffique, and we may freely goe thither if we will. . . I found in a faire Hall a very large Bell, which we measured, and found to be seven paces and three hand breadths, and it is full of Letters from the top to the bottome but there was no Nation that could understand them.[2] On the shoare where we landed to goe to Dogon,

[1] *i.e.* a *Chinthe.*

[2] Presumably Dammazedi's bell; it was very likely inscribed in Pali, though it is hard to accept the statement that no one could understand it.

which is made of large strong timbers, are two Statues, which resemble two Boyes from the head downwards, their faces after the likeness of devils with two wings."

Ralph Fitch, the Englishman, who came to Burma at about the same time, wrote an account of the country which so closely resembles that of Balbi that some have doubted whether in truth he ever came to Burma and suggest that he is simply a plagiarist: of Dagon he says,

"About two dayes journey from Pegu, there is a Varelle or Pagode, which is the Pilgrimage of the Pegues, it is called Dogoune, and is of a wonderfull bignesse, and all gilded from the foot to the top. And there is a house by it, wherein the Tallipoies which are their Priests doe Preach. . . . There are houses very faire round about for the Pilgrimes to lie in; and many goodly Houses for the Tallipoies to Preach in, which are full of images both of men and women, which are all gilded over with gold. It is the fairest place, as I suppose, that is in the world; it standeth very high, and there are foure ways to it, which all along are set with Trees of fruits, in such wise that a man may goe in the shade above two miles in length. And when their Feast day is, a man can hardly passe by water or by land for the great presse of people; for they come from all places of the Kingdome of Pegu thither at their Feast".

Perhaps the most significant point in these accounts of sixteenth century Dagon is the reference to the annual "great Mart where are all sorts of merchandises which are current in those Countries, which they frequent in great multitudes, which come thither not so much for devotion as traffique". The full moon of Tabaung, which occurs approximately in March, and to a lesser extent the full moon of Thadingyut in October also, were, as now, the occasions of great religious festivals which brought "a great presse of people" to the major pagodas; and such festivals were normally accompanied by a great fair, as still today in Upper Burma the greater religious holidays are the occasions of fairs held at the chief pagodas. These fairs were formerly one of the principal means by which goods were carried from the place of origin to the place of consumption, and they played therefore an important part in the economy of Burma. At what date the Tabaung festival at the Shwe Dagon first became the occasion for such a fair is not known, but as Dagon grew in fame as a place of devotion, so its annual fair must have grown in magnitude, while the festival of Thadingyut appears also to have been accompanied by a fair of only lesser importance. The fact that San Stephano and Varthema make no reference to Dagon would suggest that at their period the Fair had not assumed its later magnitude; but evidently by the end of the sixteenth century the Fair was sufficiently famous to attract people from distant parts, and it is not unreasonable to assume that at this time the Dagon Fair was one of the chief markets for overseas trade, possibly even rivalling Pegu which, however, would have a more steady, not a

seasonal, trade. Perhaps the change which was taking place in the course of the Delta rivers in the later sixteenth century brought the Dagon Fair into greater prominence; for though the Fair may have had local importance earlier on, the same circumstances which were to bring Syriam out of obscurity would operate to elevate the Dagon Fair. This Fair continued to be held at the full moon of Tabaung for centuries, until, indeed, the British period of Burmese history.

At the same time the commercial importance of Rangoon was essentially seasonal. It is evident from the graphic descriptions of Balbi and Fitch that Dagon was as yet, for the greater part of the year, primarily a place of religious interest; it is the Pagoda that excites the interest of the foreigners, and while at its festivals Dagon would be full of people as Fitch states, at other times it would be a very quiet spot. Dalla is normally still of greater importance in mundane affairs; Fitch saying of it that "hath a faire Port into the Sea, from where goe many ships to Malacca, Mecca, and many other places", while he makes no reference to shipping at Dagon, which became commercially noteworthy only on the occasion of its great festival. But we learn from these accounts a good deal of the condition of the place in the later sixteenth century. The Venetian, accustomed to the tideless Mediterranean, was struck by the rise and fall of the tide, a point not referred to by the Englishman who was familiar with the rise and fall of the tide around the English coast; in respect of the tide the River was thus much as it is to-day. There was a wooden landing place with wooden stairs leading up to the bank, with *chinthes* guarding it. There were a fair number of shops in the town by the bank of the river, but most of the buildings were *kyaungs;* the profusion of vegetation took the fancy of the traveller who comments on the gardens around these *kyaungs*. The main street of the town ran straight from the waterside northwards towards the Pagoda, and all along this road were more buildings, which, from their description as "paint houses" (i.e. pent houses) through which men might walk would appear to have been open *zayats*. After two miles of this, though the Venetian reckons it at one mile only, the traveller came to the Pagoda steps, which ascending he found the wide platform "greater than Saint Markes" with kyaungs on it, and the great bell of Dammazedi. Such then was Dagon, a little town by the River, and a long road lined with *zayats* leading to the great Pagoda; that was all. There is little evidence to justify the suggestion that it was a town whose population could contribute "five hundred viss of gold and five thousand viss of bronze" to the Shwe Dagon. Most of the year the town must have been almost deserted, springing to life for a few days when pilgrims and traders came from near and far to worship at the Pagoda and to exchange their goods, and to see the King and his household like themselves reverencing the Shwe Dagon. The town is insignificant; it is Golden Dagon standing on its hill above the town that impresses the stranger; it is the Pagoda, and not the town, that is "the fairest place, as I suppose, that is in the world".

Indeed the town itself must at times have been a far from happy place to live in. True its very insignificance would save it from many of the troubles that afflicted greater towns; Dalla was still a notable port and housed the King's elephants; Pegu was the greatest port in Lower Burma; Syriam was rising in importance, for Balbi refers to it as a sea-port and in 1569 Caesar Fredericke mentions "Cirion" while he makes no reference to Dagon. But even so, insignificant as it was, Dagon had its share of troubles; the happy days of the Mon Kings had gone and there was much warfare in the sixteenth century. Dagon had been occupied by Tabinshwehti, who reverenced the Pagoda and proclaimed his sovereignty of the Delta, as had the Mon Kings, by adorning it along with other Mon shrines: "this King had them put a crown adorned with many gems on the Umbrella of the Lagun hair relic pagoda. The king gave the queen herself as an offering and redeemed her with ten viss of gold."[1] But in 1550 rebellion broke out, the Mons rising against their new masters; an illegitimate member of the Mon dynasty set himself up as a *minlaung* under the name of Smim Htaw and occupied Dagon. He was soon driven out by Bayinnaung, Tabinshwehti's successor; but the town must have suffered in these troubles and in the disturbed period which followed while Bayinnaung was striving to assert his authority over the Delta. Another rival for the throne, the Mon lord Smim Sawhtut appeared, and also, it would seem, held Dagon, for the *History of Kings* states that he "put an umbrella on the Lagun Pagoda, adorning it with various gems". But he was killed in battle and Smim Htaw was soon afterwards made prisoner and executed. Even after that, there was still much disorder and unrest. Moreover, it is said that during the reign of Bayinnaung in the year 1564, at the same time as the Queen's death, there was an eclipse of the sun accompanied by an earthquake, in which "the Lagun hair relics crumbled down. They had to pull down the pagoda to the middle stage, and build it up again. His Majesty had the privilege of raising the crown, and of putting an Umbrella over the dome, of overlaying it with gold, and thus enshrining the pagoda".[2] During this period Dagon came under the control of a myosa, a Siamese named Aukbya Setki, who having treacherously betrayed the Siamese capital, Ayuthia, to Bayinnaung, was rewarded with Dagon. Bayinnaung's son, Nandabayin, also reverenced the Shwe Dagon; he sent his general Binnya Dala, a Mon lord, "to put on gold leaf five viss in weight, and overlay the spire down to the bulging part of the plantain bud, to the silver stays with five viss of gold leaf. He was permitted to put on an Umbrella with a crown. He cast a bronze bell of forty viss weight, and offered it to the Lagun hair relics"[3]

Thus the Pagoda was still reverenced by the Burmese Kings, while Dagon itself remained a small town of little note. But times were changing, and the rise of Syriam was to bring Dagon into more prominence.

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[1] *History of Kings.*
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*

The ever-changing rivers and creeks of the Delta had effected one more change, and Pegu was no more a port. In the latter sixteenth century the Pegu River ceased to flow into the Gulf of Martaban, but cut back and flowed in a more westerly direction as it does today. Ocean-going ships, even the small ships of those days, could no longer reach Pegu; other ports must take its place. But Pegu remained the capital of the Delta for the time being, and the port which succeeded to its maritime importance must therefore have easy access to it. The Pegu River now flowed to the sea past Syriam, easily accessible from the sea by the largest of vessels and also easily accessible by river-boat from Pegu, which long continued to be the commercial centre of the Delta even after it had ceased to be a port and even when it was no longer the capital of a kingdom: for as late as the beginning of the eighteenth century it was recorded that "in this kingdom of Pegu there is a province called Siriam, which is reached in boats through canals debouching into the river. It takes three days' travelling to reach the town where the merchandise has to be sold".[1] Similarly Fitch a hundred years earlier noted that at Syriam "the ships stay and discharge and send up their goods in Paroes to Pegu". Thus Syriam became the chief port, though Pegu remained the commercial centre. The change in the course of the Pegu River caused much confusion in the minds of European cartographers, and as late as the end of the eighteenth century some were still confusing that river with the Sittang.[2] In truth, the cartographers' notions of the topography of the Delta were often very strange, and their maps are of little assistance to the historian. Nevertheless, they have a certain negative significance; thus there is only one map of the sixteenth century which marks Dagon and this is in Rotz's *Boke of Ydrographie* of 1542,[3] which, curiously, omits Pegu, possibly because it was not near the sea-coast, and which does not give Syriam; apart from that, Dagon does not appear on a map until the middle of the seventeenth century. A map of 1519-22 (B. M. maps 29. c. 6) shows Pegu but neither Dagon nor Syriam; Ortelier in 1575 shows Pegu but likewise gives neither Dagon nor Syriam; Mercator's Atlas of 1595 also marks only Pegu, as does Langren's map of 1598-1600; Dagon appears along with Syriam in some of Blaeu's maps of 1640 and later; and Wilde's map of 1643 or somewhat later, which gives Pegu and Syriam, includes also Dagon. "Dogon" appears, also in D'Abbeville's map of 1654, and from that time onwards is, like Syriam, consistently shown by the cartographers. It may thus be seen how Syriam and Dagon became of importance in the seventeenth century, whereas previously, in the sixteenth century, they had held little interest for the makers and purchasers of maps.

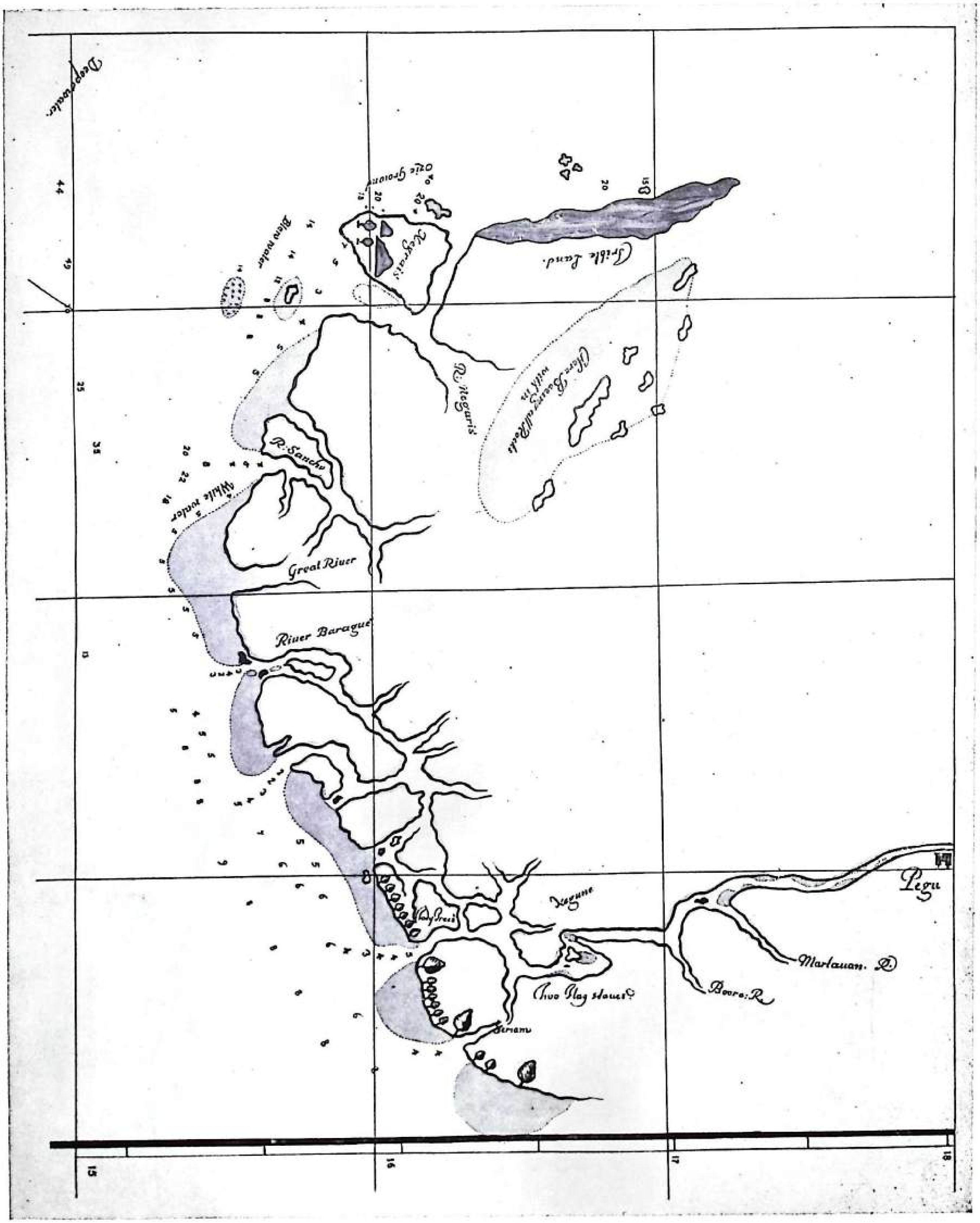
It would appear that in the seventeenth century it was possible to approach Syriam and Dagon from the sea by a creek which ran to the east

[1] *Storia do Mogor* IV. p. 209.

[2] *e.g. Basset* 1791 and *Laurie and Whittle* 1797, link the Sittang and Pegu Rivers together.

[3] See Map II.

MAP No. III



By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

CHARLES WILDE'S CHART (c. 1643)

of the Syriam ridge, parallel to the Rangoon River. Wilde's chart,[1] which is dated the middle seventeenth century, shows the River itself with perfect clearness, even to the groves of trees which formed the landmarks on either side of the mouth and the soundings at the River entrance; and also with equal precision the creek farther east, at the mouth of which soundings are again given. This creek would appear to be the one marked on later charts as the "Appoo River." The Appoo, now vanished, is consistently shown in the eighteenth century charts; but in Laurie and Whittle's chart of 1798 it is marked as drying up, though the remnants of it figure in a chart as late as the year 1835.[2] Probably the Apaung creek of the present day represents the estuary of the "Appoo." It would appear from the charts to have been navigable in the middle eighteenth century, but it must have already been silting up, and probably by that date the Rangoon River had become the normal approach to Syriam and Dagon.[3]

But whatever the development of Rangoon and Appoo Rivers may have been, it is certain that circumstances tended to raise first Syriam and then Dagon into the rank of the principal port of Lower Burma. And with the rise of Syriam occurs also the establishment of European settlements in the Delta; for the last ten years of Nandabayin's reign were marked by an almost complete collapse of Royal power and by accompanying rebellion as well as invasion by both Siamese and Arakanese, and it was out of these troubles that arose the government of the Portuguese adventurer, Felipe de Brito y Nicote, at the new port of Syriam. From the year 1600 onwards de Brito held Syriam, which he first entered as an employee of the Arakanese when they invaded the Delta in that year. He set up as an independent ruler and was recognized by the Viceroy of Portuguese India as the official governor of the place. With the aid of a small force of Portuguese, numbering only a few score, he held the surrounding country, while his ships prevented trading vessels from entering any other port. Thus artificial as well as natural causes elevated Syriam. But de Brito had little respect for religion: Dagon came under his sway and he took Dammazedi's great bell from the Pagoda so that he might cast its bronze into cannon; but by the

[1] See Map III.

[2] *Ross, Crawfurd, and Roe.*

[3] It has been suggested that as late as the middle of the sixteenth century the Hlaing River found its way to the sea through the Appoo; that the Rangoon River did not definitely exist until the middle of the seventeenth century; and that even then it was so choked by sandbanks as to be of little value for navigation. Only in the later eighteenth century, according to this theory, did the Rangoon River become navigable. But Wilde's chart of the seventeenth century, indicating the River as navigable, seems to negative this suggestion. Further, the eighteenth century charts of the River, such as D'Anville's, are marked with traditional names, obviously given by sailors, which must have been in use for many years—*e.g.*, " Manoel de Silva Point," which in some charts bears the legend " Here Manoel de Silva lost his ship," must surely date back to the days when the Portuguese flourished at Syriam, in the very early seventeenth century, and this would indicate that the River was in use in those days even though, in view of Manoel de Silva's unfortunate mishap, sandbanks were doubtless numerous. The other names marked on such charts suggest equally that the River had been long in use by the time that, *e.g.*, D'Anville published his chart in 1762. Moreover, D'Anville and others give much information about the Rangoon River, but none about the Appoo beyond marking its position in general. By 1762 at all events, the River was the normal approach, and doubtless had been a quite possible approach for some time. Probably the Appoo had been an alternative route, but not the only route.

power of the Buddha the boat bearing it to Syriam sank in the River. In the absence of a Buddhist King it fell to the lot of the people of Dagon to embellish the Pagoda: "The ship commander, the foreigner, Kappitan Jerā (Captain General) was king again in Syriam. Because he was of Devadatta's Company, a heretic, he had no opportunity of enshrining at the relic chamber of the Pagoda. The superior of Angebut, the superior of the hill Lacew, these two with the people of the city erected an umbrella. The superior of the hill monastery gave the time. The combined number of precious stones was three hundred and fifty. In the year, 972, on Friday, the eleventh of the light half of the month Srāvaṇa,[1] the citizens made merit in putting a crown on the Lagun pagoda. The foreigner Kappitan Jerā was king in Syriam twelve years".[2] Then in 1613 King Anaukpetlun, Nandabayin's son and successor, attacked Syriam; the town was stormed and de Brito who was made prisoner was executed by impalement. But that was by no means the end of the Europeans at Syriam, for a few years later the English East India Company formed a factory there, and later on the French. With the rise of Syriam, must have occurred a development of the importance of the Shwe Dagon Fair.

After the taking of Syriam, Anaukpetlun, apparently as a thank-offering, "gave four hundred and twenty men to keep the hair relics. He had them cast a bronze bell and offer it to the Buddha's relics"; the bell was no doubt intended to replace Dammazedi's which had sunk in the River. Six years later "he put up an umbrella and put a crown on the Lagun Pagoda. The height and the circumference of the crown were four cubits and two hands equally. The weight of the gold was two viss, fifty-five ticals. There were two thousand rubies, and the weight of the diamonds in the crown was two viss". His officers, apparently Mons in his service judging from their names, also made offerings: "Punakamā put down twelve silver bells five viss and five and a half ticals weight, Bañā Juk Lalī gave silver bells and banyan leaves of two ticals gold. The weight of the two bells was ten viss and seventy-five ticals".[3]

But the Shwe Dagon was damaged by another earthquake during this reign, and the top of the Pagoda fell down. The terraces also suffered; "The big wall on the north-west side of the Lagun pagoda broke down, of the lower stage four standard cubits, and of the upper stage five standard cubits, making nine standard cubits. The big wall on the south-east broke down to thirty-five standard cubits. Adding on the rain-shelter there was a length of two-hundred and fifty-six fathoms in all. His Majesty was able to finish the work on the inside wall". The King also made gifts to the Pagoda every year: "each year at the full moon of Āsvina[4] as well as at the full moon of Phālguna[5], four lamp towers at the four sides, with golden

[1] *Srāvaṇa* 972 — Wagaung (July-August) 1610.
[2] *History of Kings.* [3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Āsvina* — Thadingyut (September-October); [5] *Phālguna* — Tabaung (February-March).

flowers, golden parched grain, golden candles, and silver candles were offered to the Lagun relic pagoda. Two white umbrellas twice in each year were presented to the Lagun pagoda. Every year gold leaf was laid on the pagoda".[1]

When in 1628 Anaukpetlun was murdered by his son Minredeippa, the latter became King for a few months, and during that period, perhaps as a sop to his conscience, he "gave an offering of lamp towers for the four sides. At the end of Lent and again at the full moon of Phālguna he had them lighted in honour of the Lagun hair relics. He paid his respects to the Lagun hair relics with golden candles, silver candles, and white umbrellas. He made plaster of lime and glue, and with black wood oil offered it to the Lagun hair relics".

Thalun, Minredeippa's uncle and successor, also celebrated his accession in a similar way, for he "put the crown on the Lagun hair relic pagoda. The weight of the gold was three viss and five and a half ticals and the number of gems was 658"; this was occasioned by an earthquake which had cast down the crown. But nine years afterwards, in 1638, the crown again fell down and had to be replaced; this was done two years later. This King also made offerings twice a year to the Pagoda "of golden flowers, silver flowers, and two white umbrellas".

Succeeding Kings similarly honoured Shwe Dagon with annual gifts, and also on occasion repaired the fabric; for in 1649 the crown fell out of alignment and King Pindale had to repair it; and in 1661 a storm and an earthquake cast down "three stages of the crown of the Lagun hair relics together with the dome, and the rest of the crown was carried over to the hill Wan at Syriam". But two years later King Pye replaced it and with his ministers offered many gifts: they "offered to the Lagun relic pagoda a hundred golden flowers, a hundred silver flowers, eight white umbrellas. four large golden candles, ten small ones, four large silver candles and ten small ones, eight diamond streamers, and eight diamond flowers, They gave food to eighty monks, including monks from Syriam, Pegu, and Lagun, on the pagoda platform". Yet again in 1664 an earthquake occurred and much of the fabric was damaged; "The crown of the Lagun pagoda fell away to the south-east on the pagoda platform. Five standard cubits and two hands of the central support broke off and fell down on the western side at the bell mouth. The umbrella slanted away to the north-west, and the diamond bulb with the wire stays lay on top of the umbrella to the south-east. The plaster of the plantain bud burst out and fell away. The lotus bud burst up in three petals and was carried away to the south-east. What remained of the bricks of the six petals on the north broke away also. The python's coil and the bell down to the main base burst out

[1] *Ibid.*

and broke to a great extent". The following year the damage was repaired so far as the fabric was concerned, and a year after that a new crown was imposed with great ceremony; "The weight of the crown was twelve viss of gold. There were 1800 gems set round the crown. They gave food to two hundred and forty monks. The offerings which were offered were very many. There were two orchestras, ten dancers, and the crown festival lasted three days".

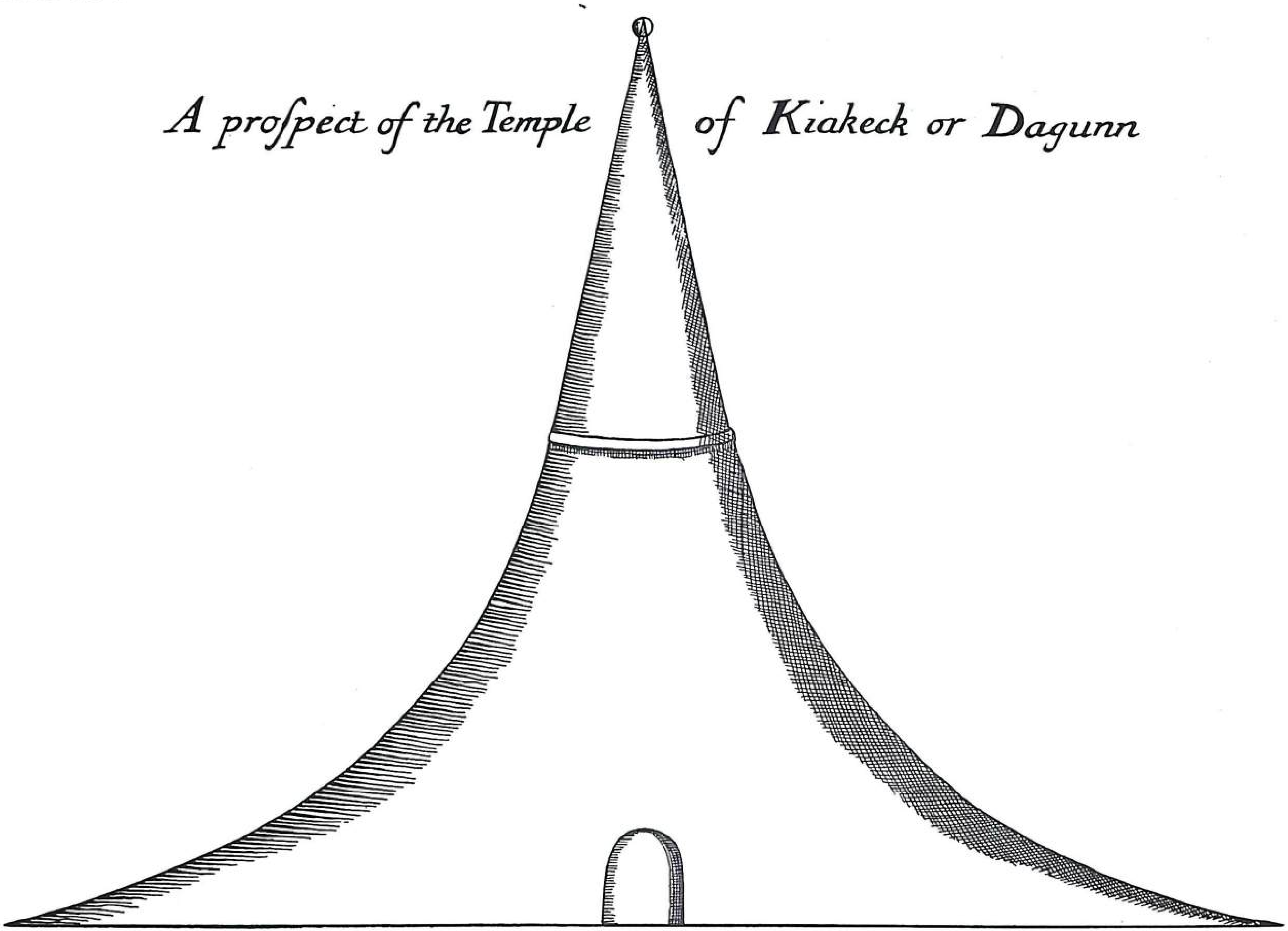
It is curious to read these accounts from the *History of Kings* of the repairs to the Pagoda, for at this time the Delta was much troubled by wars; the King's government was weak, and the Siamese invaded the Delta; Pegu and Syriam were raided, and doubtless Dagon suffered also. One wonders whether the earthquakes which afflicted the Pagoda in the chronicles are not a symbolical manner of representing purely human misfortunes; it is significant that the earthquake of 1564 occurred in the year of the death of Bayinnaung's queen, that there was an earthquake in 1628 when Minredeippa was murdered, that the crown fell out of alignment in 1649 at the time of Thalun's death, that a severe earthquake afflicted the Pagoda in 1661 when Pindale was deposed and murdered, and that the Siamese ravaged the Delta at about the time of the earthquake of 1664. It may well be that the tradition of disaster survived these events and that the chroniclers, obsessed with the importance of the Pagoda, interpreted every misfortune as a calamity to the Shwe Dagon, just as in some cases they interpreted every war of earlier days as an attempt to seize and carry away the Hairs. Nevertheless, the area is subject to earthquakes and these stories may thus be true.

In any case, it is clear that it is still the Pagoda that gives Dagon its fame. Syriam is the centre of trade: Dagon the centre of devotion; and so it remained till the middle of the eighteenth century.[1] As late as the beginning of that century an English traveller can find no more to say of Dagon than that "there are two large Temples near Syriam, one stands about six miles to the Southward, called Kiakiack, or the God of Gods Temple. The other stands in a low Plain North of Syriam, about the same distance, called Dagon. His Doors and Windows are always shut, and none enters his Temple but his Priests, and they won't tell what Shape he is of, only he is not of human Shape. As soon as Kiakiack dissolves the Being or Frame of the World, Dagon or Dagun will gather up the fragments and make a new one. There are yearly Fairs held near these Temples, and the Free-will Offerings arising at those Fairs, are for the Use of the Temples".[2]

[1] It is difficult to account for the strange statement in the *British-Burma Gazetteer* II, 568, that the Governor of Dagon was the principal intermediary between the Europeans at Syriam and the Mon court at Pegu, that the King of Pegu increased the authority of the Governor until he was the first officer in the kingdom so that he might check the foreigners, and that the accounts of Portuguese and English officers are full of the doings of the Governor and of their own efforts to win his favour. There is no evidence at all of the importance thus attributed to the Governor of Dagon, and no trace in the records of the East India Company of efforts to obtain his goodwill, for no such officer is mentioned therein. Nor was there a Portuguese factory at Syriam at any time contemporaneously with an English (or a French) factory.

[2] Hamilton: *New Account of the East Indies, II,* 57.

PLATE No. 1



Hamilton: New Account of the East Indies, 1744.

Hamilton's description of the Pagoda is curious. Evidently he was unable to grasp the novel idea of a religious edifice built as a solid mass of brick, and since to his mind a temple must have doors and windows, he concludes that doors and windows are indeed there but that, as he has not seen them, they must be kept shut. Thus in his illustration of the Shwe Dagon he depicts an imaginary entrance.[1] His grasp of Buddhist philosophy will also hardly bear examination. But at least his account shows one thing beyond doubt, and that is that Dagon was a place of religious interest and nothing else.

Of industries the town seems to have had none except fishing; Gasparo Balbi in the late sixteenth century describes how the fishers of the River were a danger to boats since they spread their nets on the water and boats which became entangled in them sometimes sank.

So until the middle of the eighteenth century the town of Dagon remained, as for centuries, a small town, little more than a village, close to the waterside, with a long road running up to the Pagoda: a town whose population was largely priestly and the inhabitants of which were required to observe strictly the Buddhist laws. At certain seasons of the year, at the time of major festivals, it became crowded with people, "all the Shans, the Mons, and the Burmese," says the *History of Kings*, who came to buy and sell and at the same time to make their devotions and witness the giving of the royal offerings: "With eight white umbrellas, four bouquets of golden flowers of a hundred blooms, four bouquets of silver flowers of a hundred blooms, and many gold and silver candles, His Majesty paid his respects to the Lagun hair relics every year. Twice a year he paid his respects to the Lagun hair relics." The *History of Syriam* describes the ceremony in more detail:

"When the royal offerings came to be presented to the Shwe Dagon Pagoda the men of the household and the clerks had to carry the golden branches and the silver branches, the elders and the salt boilers had to carry the golden candlesticks and the silver candlesticks, the sitkes had to bear the umbrellas and the pennants, and the rosaries. At the observance of the royal almsgiving the boxers had to perform for three full days; the toll-collectors and writers of the festival and the toll-collectors and writers of the boats had to give the letpet for the prizes, the advocates had to hold the prizes and distribute them. When the Lord Governor of the City (*i.e.* of Syriam) went up to the High Festival of Thadingyut this was the order of procession of his retinue; in front there were the cannon, after them the warriors, after them the musketeers, after them the Sitke, after him the boatmen, after them the Yun Sitke, after him followed the keepers of the boats in full array and armed with the weapons that they always carried; after them the fan bearers and then the swords sheathed in scarlet cloth;

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[1] See Plate No. 1. A Prospect of the Kiakeck or Dagunn.

after them the master of the ceremonies; after him on one side came the betel-boxes, with men in shady hats, the baskets carrying the teapots and cocoanut fronds and fine mats; on the other side followed those with red headdresses[1] carrying the halberds, spears, guns and all manner of swords."

But it is to be feared that these occasions were sometimes the scene of conduct hardly appropriate to a religious ceremony. "The inhabitants of this country," says a writer of about the year 1700, "are accustomed to hold several festivals in the course of the year in honour of their idols. But the principal festivity is celebrated outside the city at the foot of the great mountains. The idols are on the summit. This feast falls in the month of February, and is called the Digon festival, which means 'Of the fire.'

"On that day the governor and the chief men of the place attend and a greater number of the inhabitants. They solemnize the festival by consuming a considerable quantity of spirits; there are also performances and dances and fireworks, which are discharged at night-time. In the preparation of these fireworks they labour for many days.

"The machine in which they enclose the powder is in shape and size like a large bowl, hooped with iron, and having a long tail. This barrel, in order that it may fly into the air, is attached to a high tree, of which there are plenty in the place, the forest being a vast one. Before the thing is set alight they resume their drinking; then the chief men draw near and bow to it as a mark of veneration.

"Once when they were performing these solemn acts, one of the officials of the law courts, being more tipsy than the rest, boasted that he could rise into the air with the firework and come down to earth again unharmed. Over this assertion several wagers for large sums were entered into, because some believed and others disbelieved him. To sum up, to avoid any fraud that the man might attempt, they bound him by his hands to the end of the firework. The end, shaped like a tail, is made out of a large tree called *bambu*, a great number of which grow in that forest and they are eight cubits in length.

"When ten o'clock at night arrived, following their custom they set a light to the fireworks, and all the people began to run about as is their fashion. The next day they found the firework a league away from the place where fire had been applied to it, and the drunkard who had been tied to it was found to have been burnt".[2]

Though this story, derived obviously from hearsay, with its absurd description of the Pagoda Hill as "the great mountains", may have been exaggerated, it is evident that the great festivals were accompanied by some want of decorum.

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[1] *i.e.* soldiers.

[2] *Storia do Mogor*, IV 209 sqq.

But at other seasons of the year than the great festivals, Dagon remained a quiet, half-deserted spot, disturbed by none of the bustle which enlivened the commercial city of Syriam across the water, a place of which a writer of 1759 can find no more to say than that it was "a very noted Pagoda".[1]

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Note on the Chronicles.

Of the Chronicles quoted from or referred to, the *Razadarit Ayebon* probably dates from the middle sixteenth century, *the History of Syriam (Thanhlyin Yazawin)* from the middle seventeenth century, and the *History of Kings* (*Slapat Rājāwaṅ Datow Smiṅ Roṅ*) from the middle eighteenth century. All, however, are found only in comparatively modern copies, generally of the nineteenth century. The *Shwedagon Thamaing* is modern and represents tradition only. The statements contained in these histories need therefore to be accepted with caution.

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[1] Letter of 1759, quoted *Dalrymple* I. 112.

CHAPTER THREE

THE FOUNDING OF RANGOON

TOWARDS the middle of the eighteenth century there was a revival of Mon nationalism in the Delta. When in 1740 it was learned that the King of Ava, Mahadammayaza-Dipati, was besieged in his own capital by invaders from Manipur, the Burmese governor of Pegu, Tha Aung by name, proclaimed himself King; he "put to death the state secretary, the two lieutenant-generals, and the governor of the prison, and made himself king in Pegu. This ruler was very harsh and cruel and reigned only a month and a half." He was murdered by his officers and the King then sent his own uncle, who established a new governor who would be faithful to his allegiance; but this governor "was very avaricious. He took bribes in gold and silver and in coin, and made great distress for the people. He ruled but four months and twenty days".[1] The weakness of the King's power and the misgovernment of his officers encouraged a revolt, and the Mons, rising in rebellion, completely overthrew the royal administration. The son of a former rebel myosa of Pagan who had fled into the Karen country in 1714 when Taninganwe, his nephew, became king, was set up as King of Pegu under the name of Smim Htaw Buddhaketi. There was little resistance from the Burmese; indeed, for some years the Mons were able to carry out raids on Upper Burma. But Smim Htaw Buddhaketi was not the type to lead his people in wars, and in 1747 he abandoned the throne, which was held for eighteen days by a monk, Nai Caraṅ Khuin, who was then replaced by a Mon lord, Binnya Dala, who had formerly served the Burmese King as Master of the Elephant Stables at Pegu and was Smim Htaw Buddhaketi's father-in-law. The Mons under his leadership continued their raids on Ava which in 1752 they sacked and burnt.

It was at this point that the great Alaungpaya rose to prominence as leader of the Burmans and began to reestablish the Burmese power. Having defeated the Mons in Upper Burma, he pursued them southwards and in February 1755 entered Prome. By May of the same year he had entered Dagon. His conquests were marked by great cruelty which spared neither age nor sex: "His Majesty Aungzeya was of a very fierce and cruel disposition, and made no account at all of life. He put to death many monks, and their iron almsbowls and silk robes were taken away, and the homespun robes were made into foot mats. Of some they made pillows, of some they made belts, and of some they made sails. The monks' robes were scattered all over land and water".[2] It is also said that when he took Pegu he found more than three thousand monks in the place, and that he had them all put to death.

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[1] *History of Kings.*
[2] *Ibid.*

It would appear that Dagon escaped the worst of these disasters; no attempt was made by the Mons to hold the town and thus no fighting occurred, and, when Alaungpaya reached the town he received the support of many of the population for "abundance of *Bûraghmahns*, which were hitherto with the *Peguers*, deserted them and came to *him*".[1] But there was as yet no general submission of the Delta, and Dagon became the scene of a good deal of fighting. The Mons still held Pegu and Syriam, and Alaungpaya therefore made Dagon his headquarters from which an attack on Syriam across the water might be projected. But for the time being it was rather Syriam which attacked Dagon. The Mons were better equipped than the Burmans in arms and ammunition, and had the further advantage of enjoying the assistance of the French establishment there, which was under the command of the Sieur Bruno. Alaungpaya's obvious course was to seek the assistance of the rivals of the French, the English, who were now established at Negrais and had almost deserted Syriam; and as early as March he had approached the head of the factory at Negrais; but his proposal was without effect, for the policy of the East India Company was to maintain strict neutrality in the contest, since their commitments in India were too great to allow of further liabilities elsewhere.

After occupying Dagon Alaungpaya received a visit from Bruno, who professed a desire to congratulate him on his conquests; but the King realised that no sincere assistance could be looked for from that quarter, and in June, a month or so after entering Dagon, he despatched a second mission to Negrais bearing various presents; and since it seemed evident that the Burmans were the winning side, the English sent two officers to him with a present of, among other items, a twelve-pounder gun, three nine-pounders, eight shot, and four chests of powder.

Meanwhile, Alaungpaya had persuaded the English shipwright, who was almost the only Englishman still resident at Syriam, to come to Dagon, and with him came four English ships that happened to be in the port. The English had suffered much at Syriam from the Francophile propensities of the Mons, and were doubtless glad to place themselves under the protection of the Burmans: so much so, that Alaungpaya appears to have received overt assistance from them, for when in May, a week or two after the King's arrival in Dagon, the Mons crossed the Pegu River and established a stockade at Tamwe to the north-east of the town, Alaungpaya had the aid of "Indian soldiers" from the four ships in expelling the Mon force.[2] At the beginning of June another English vessel, the snow *Arcot* appeared in the River in need of repairs, and the shipwright, Stringfellow by name, sent a message urging the Captain, Robert Jackson, to come to Dagon where the King would give every possible assistance. On the sixth June, the *Arcot*

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[1] Dalrymple, I. p. 166.

[2] *Konbaungset* I. 144.

anchored off Dagon. Alaungpaya was at once visited by a Company's officer, John Whitehill, who happened to be on board, and Whitehill gave him a present of a fowling-piece and two bottles of rosewater; the King extended to him a courteous reception, promised the needed assistance of carpenters and caulkers, and also agreed to send river-boats to Negrais with letters. But Alaungpaya wanted a *quid pro quo;* the Mons had the aid of the French vessels that were in the port of Syriam, and under their protection might come up the River and attack Dagon; he therefore needed guns. So the following day he invited all the Englishmen of the various ships to come ashore, and in their absence sent men to demand all the guns, small arms, and ammunition that the *Arcot* carried, as well as a statement of her cargo. Jackson, who had not gone ashore, replied that this demand was contrary to established usage and that rather than comply he would go to Syriam. The day after, the Burmans came and threatened to take the guns by force, but Jackson prepared to resist and made his ship ready to sail. Alaungpaya, having no desire to see his enemies strengthened by the accession of the English vessel, sent his son to explain that the demand was made under the apprehension that it was the custom at Syriam to land all arms, but that if it was not the custom the demand would not be persisted in. Nevertheless, the Burmans managed to get possession of all the arms and ammunition of the country vessel *Elizabeth* that had come up from Syriam before the *Arcot* arrived.

Alaungpaya was no doubt disappointed, but he could not afford to alienate the English at the moment, especially as the Negrais staff seemed well-disposed and sent him at this juncture a dozen muskets and some powder as a foretaste of the heavy guns which were to come later. Moreover, it was not possible for him to stay at Dagon any longer; a son of Mahadammayaza-Dipati had effected a rising in Upper Burma, and Alaungpaya left Dagon towards the end of June to secure his authority in the north. The rains had begun, and perhaps he hoped that weather conditions would prevent much activity during his absence. He had taken measures for the safety of Dagon; a new town had already been planned, and a moat and fortified gateways had been projected; while a large force was left to hold the town under Zeyananda who had been appointed Wun or Governor; further, Alaungpaya ordered the people of the villages which he passed to prepare boats against his return: "having appointed about 15,000 men[1] to maintain the *Post* at *Dagon,* (he) set ous accordingly; and as he passed by every *Place,* gave orders, for them respectivelyt to call in the former Inhabitants, and obliged them to build a number of *fighting Boats,* in proportion to the number of the People; many of which I saw on my way down, and all of which will probably be ready by the time he returns to *Dagon,* which he purposed to do in November, with, as he said, 1,000 Boats and 100,000 Men, but by the best Information I can get, his Boats will not exceed 500, nor his Troops, both by Land and Water, not

[1] *Konbaungset* I. 143 gives over 30,000.

above thirty or forty thousand, which perhaps, with the *Army* now at *Dagon*, may make the whole Body about 50,000".[1]

If, however Alaungpaya did in fact expect that all would be quiet at Dagon in his absence, he was disappointed, The Mons took advantage of his departure to make several attacks. Like Alaungpaya, they realised the effect which the English ships might have on the fortunes of the day, and even before Alaungpaya departed, they had sent a letter to Jackson stating that an attack on Dagon was impending and asking the English not to fire on their boats; and at the same time offered Jackson a friendly welcome at Syriam. Jackson, who was disturbed at the difficulties he had got into with the Burmans and was disgusted because the help in repairing his ship which Alaungpaya had promised had not in fact been forthcoming, was inclined to listen to such suggestions, the more so as Alaungpaya's departure seemed to promise success for the Mons. So he replied that he would not oppose the Mon forces and that he would come down to Syriam at the first opportunity.

A few days afterwards the Mons attempted a surprise attack, their boats coming up the river with the night tide while another force crossed the Pegu River and advanced by land. The boats, however, were repulsed by the fire of the Burmans who lined the bank of the River, while the land force, finding that the Burmese post on the Pagoda Hill could be carried only by assault, and disheartened by the failure of the attack from the river, made only a feeble attempt; and after sporadic firing had gone on through the night and most of the morning, the Mons withdrew. By noon the attack was over. During this affair the English remained strictly neutral, but the Burmans suspected them for that very reason of favouring the enemy since Alaungpaya seems to have extracted from them some sort of promise that they would aid his men in the event of an attack. The Burmans were not far wrong in their surmise; a week later another message came from the Mons announcing a further attack, and to this Jackson and the other English officers replied that if the Mons would aid them to escape from Dagon they would give active assistance in the fight. They at the same time gave the Mons information about the strength of the Burmans, which consisted of eighty river-boats, of which nine were armed with guns, a Dutch Brigantine which they had commandeered and manned with their own men, and two guns mounted on shore. The Burmans, however, became aware of these conversations and demanded a definite assurance that if the Mons attacked the place the English would resist them. The English replied that without express orders from the Company they must remain neutral, but that if the Mons attacked them they would assist the Burmans. The latter were far from being satisfied with this, and kept a strong guard of boats around the *Arcot* for several days. Meanwhile the Mons, assured of the assistance of

[1] **Baker's narration, *Dalrymple* I. 166.**

the English ships which, they hoped, would give certain victory, prepared for battle; and early one morning the Mon flotilla of two hundred boats and one snow, headed by two French vessels, could be seen down the River. They had dropped down the Pegu River with the tide overnight, and lay at the junction of that River with the Hlaing River, waiting for the turn of the tide to carry them up to Dagon. As soon as daylight enabled the enemy to be seen, the Burmese commander sent an urgent message to Jackson demanding his support, but, in the words of Jackson, "very little notice was taken of this application". Owing to the time of the tide, it was two o'clock in the afternoon before the flotilla arrived off the town. The French ships anchored and opened fire with their cannon while the Mon musketeers commenced firing at the Burmese boats. The Burmese had withdrawn their boats into a creek, probably the old creek running up to the Sule Pagoda, where they hoped to be protected by a small battery consisting no doubt of the two guns mounted on shore, the existence of which had been reported to the Mons; these guns had been placed behind hastily constructed works in a mango grove by the river bank. As soon as the firing commenced, the English ships also began bombarding the Burmese position, and, unable to withstand the combined force of the enemy artillery, the Burmese were compelled to abandon their boats and take shelter among the mango trees. There they put up a determined resistance, and though their cannon were not well managed, nevertheless they managed to do some execution with their musketry, two Mons being killed on board the *Arcot*. It appeared to the French and English that if the Mons had gone inshore they could have taken all the Burmese boats, but they were afraid to face the Burmese musketry at close quarters, and despite the persuasions of the Europeans they remained out in the stream. Firing went on until nightfall, and after dark the English ships moved farther out into the stream, to be out of range of the Burmese muskets. The bombardment went on for seven days, and then having exhausted their ammunition and achieved nothing, the Mons withdrew. The attack had been ill-managed; no diversion was made by any land force, and the Mons refused to engage in hand-to-hand fighting. Thus their seven days' attack left the Burmese still in possession of their fortification. When the Mons returned to Syriam, the English ships went with them. Jackson, who had apparently gone to Syriam after the first day's fighting, afterwards explained his conduct in preferring the Mons at Syriam to the Burmese at Dagon on the grounds that he was sick with dysentery and needed medical attention from the doctor attached to the French factory: "there every thing was to be got for his assistance, at *Dagoon* nothing; nor had they seen a *fowl* since they had been there, and no *water* but what was very bad; which had thrown him into a Bloody flux and a strong fever". For the time being Dagon was safe; but its position was precarious, for now the Mons were reinforced by the English ships as well as the French.

The King was greatly angered by the conduct of the English in assisting his enemies; when the mission from Negrais bringing the cannon reached him

at Shwebo in September, he expressed his wrath: "Your ships that were at *Dagon* with Mr. *Whitehill,* I treated with kindness", he said, "and supplied them with what they wanted, and at my leaving that *Place,* to come here to keep our fast, desired him that, in case it should be required in my absence, on an emergency, to assist my *People;* or at least not to join the *Peguers* against *them;* which though he promised to observe, yet was the first that fired on them". This episode implanted in his mind a suspicion of the English which was never eradicated and which led to the massacre of the English at Negrais when opportunity offered four year's later.

Alaungpaya now sent a new commander, Minhlaminkaungkyaw, to Dagon, who brought reinforcements with him and took energetic measures to improve the defences.[1] At Syriam, meanwhile, preparations were in hand for a further attack on Dagon, and the English were compelled to take part in this also, it being made clear to them that unless they rendered such assistance they would not be allowed to depart. The English had found the Mons if anything even less easy to deal with than the Burmans; the Mons also were suspicious of their good faith, and when the chief of the Negrais factory wrote demanding the surrender of four guns belonging to the English factory at Syriam, the Mon commander refused, saying that "he knew Mr. *Brooke* wanted to give them to the Bûraghmahns that he might get some *Rubies* from the *DagoonPagoda*". In December Dagon endured another onslaught of even greater magnitude than the last. Three English ships, one French ship, the snow belonging to the Mon King, and three hundred boats participated; while ten thousand men were landed to march against the fortifications on the Pagoda Hill and at the mango grove. The Burmans found it impossible to hold the town, and withdrew to their fort at the Pagoda. There they maintained themselves, and the Mons proved unable to dislodge them. When the Burmans sent down fireboats on the tide, the Mon flotilla and the European ships had to slip their cables and retreat; the land force, unsupported from the River, made an ineffectual attempt to storm the fort but was easily repulsed. So the atack was brought to an end. After this abortive effort the English ships were allowed to depart, though the Mons retained five of the *Arcot's* guns.

This was the last attack which the Mons were able to make on Dagon. Alaungpaya returned from Upper Burma with a a large force and was now able to invest Syriam, which was finally taken in July 1756. The few Englishmen in the town were spared, but Bruno and the other French were put to death. Such was also the fate of the officers of two French vessels[2] which entered the River two days after the town had been taken; they were decoyed ashore and were beheaded. The crews were made prisoners and were taken into the royal service as soldiers.[3]

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[1] *Konbaungset* I. 160.

[2] *Konbaungset* I. 189 gives three ships.

[3] The episode of the English ships at Dagon is fully dealt with in Dalrymple, *Oriental Repertory,* whence the above quotations have been taken, and in Hall, *Tragedy of Negrais.*

Alaungpaya then proceeded to the capture of Pegu, which he took in May 1757; but though the Mon resistance was not yet by any means finally broken, Alaungpaya's power had still to be thoroughly established in Upper Burma, so after a further visit to Dagon in July he went northwards, leaving the town under the care of one of his officers, Namdeoda. For some time he was busy repelling the Manipuris, and while he was thus engaged in the winter of 1758-59, the Mons rose once more. They were able to defeat Namdeoda and reoccupy Dagon, as well as Syriam and Dalla. Alaungpaya hastily came to the Delta at the news of this disaster, but meanwhile Namdeoda had gathered a force from Upper Burma and marched on Dagon. The Mons were holding the stockade by the river and also, it would seem, the Pagoda Hill, for it is said that they were "encamped a little above the city."[1] After a stern struggle, however, the Burmans won the day and once more secured possession of the town and Hill. Dalla and Syriam fell soon after, and Alaungpaya's arrival finally ended the rebellion. From this time onwards the Burmans suffered no serious threat to their power on the part of the Mons.

Alaungpaya's conquest is the most important event in the history of Rangoon. May 1755 marks the beginning of modern Rangoon; from this time it becomes the major port of Burma. Alaungpaya was resolved that Syriam must be destroyed and that some other place must become the port of the Delta. Even before he had taken the town he informed the English that "We intend to destroy Syriam", and he fulfilled his intention; a European writer of 1782 says of Syriam that "this town no longer exists."[2] There were good reasons for the destruction of Syriam. Syriam had been the centre of Mon resistance and had also been the centre of European interests in the country; Alaungpaya desired to make a fresh start and to have a new port that would be neither Mon nor European by tradition, but would be Burmese. Further, there were sound economic reasons for abandoning Syriam. The Delta was effecting yet another change, and Syriam was ceasing to have any utility as a port. The Pegu River was silting up off Syriam, and sea-going vessels were finding it difficult to navigate the reach opposite the town. The English had already noted that Syriam "it seems will in a few years be almost impracticable for large ships by the encrease of the *Sands* in several places, especially before the *Town*." Hence they had already established a new factory at Negrais, since "the Danger of going out and coming in of that *Harbour*, is nothing in comparison of *Syriam River*, or the Coast *near it;* whence the *strong Tides* and the *Sands*, lying at a great distance from the shoar makes the Entry difficult and dangerous for Ships."[3] The English evidently regarded the whole River, for the term "Syriam River" was used to imply the Rangoon River, as unsatisfactory, and would have preferred the new port to be else-

[1] Symes: *Embassy to Ava*, p. 43.
[2] Sonnerat: *Voyage aux Indes Orientales*, II. 287.
[3] Dalrymple: *Oriental Repertory*, I. 129 sqq.

where. But Dagon was not so dangerous as Syriam, where the sandbanks had developed "especially before the *Town*", and, moreover, Alaungpaya would not be willing to establish his port at or near Negrais where the English were in possession, so that Bassein was ruled out, the more so as it had no through river connection with the main Irrawaddy in the dry season.[1] If a new port had to be created, Dagon, already a place of commercial importance at the seasons of the great festivals, and near enough to Syriam to draw on the same field of trade, was the obvious place. So Alaungpaya established a new town at Dagon, which hereafter ceases to be a quiet riverside village and becomes instead a flourishing port. He gave it a new name, changing *Lagun* to *Rangon,* "the End of Strife"; and the war being over, he built a new town of Rangon, or Rangoon as the English called it, a town which lasted for ninety years.

[1] Wilson: *Documents Illustrative of the Burmese War,* xliv.

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CHAPTER FOUR

ALAUNGPAYA'S RANGOON (1).

THE most striking feature of Alaungpaya's Rangoon is the insignificance of its size.[1] So small was it that it could all be comprised within an area between the Sule Pagoda and the River on the north and south respectively, with, as its eastern and western limits, approximately Judah Ezekiel Street and 30th Street. Its total area could not have been more than an eighth of a square mile, and its circumference not more than a couple of miles. As befitted a port, the town was sited close to the River; and its southern boundary ran parallel to the river-bank for about three-quarters of a mile as the crow flies, though as the boundary was by no means a straight line the actual length was rather more. On the west, the town was only about a furlong in width; and the eastern face was about six hundred yards. The northern face was about eleven hundred yards long. Roughly, on the east the boundary lay on the line of modern Judah Ezekiel Street from the Strand to Dalhousie Street; on the west it ran between Maung Taulay Street and Mogul Street from the Strand to a short distance beyond Merchant Street; the northern face cut across the modern Fytche Square, Phayre Street, and Sparks Street, in a direction north of east, from Merchant Street on the south-west to Dalhousie Street on the north-east.

Thus the whole of the town was restricted to a small area which is only a fragment of present-day Rangoon; and its centre lay well to the east of the Sule Pagoda, the centre of the modern city.

Round all four sides ran a stockade, built of solid teak piles, driven a few feet into the ground and rising in places to a height of as much as twenty feet, though in other places it was only ten or twelve feet. It was strengthened by heavy beams placed transversely across the tops of the posts, and, according to some observers, by embankments of earth within. At every few feet loopholes for musketeers were cut, and behind the stockade were platforms for the musketeers to stand on. Without, the stockade was protected by a ditch "overgrown with arums, pontiderias, the pitsia stratiota, and other aquatic plants",[2] which ran round three sides of the town, while the River protected the southern side; but the stockade was not precisely on the bank of the River; it stood at its nearest point twenty or thirty yards back. Though the stockade was essential for defence, it had the disadvantage of cutting off any view of the River, while it was complained also that it produced a confined and insalubrious atmosphere within the town.

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[1] See Map IV.

[2] Crawfurd: *Journal of an Embassy to the Court of Ava*, II. 51.

Inside the stockade, which, as suburbs grew up, came to be known as "the Fort" (the strict meaning of the Burmese *myo*), the town consisted primarily of three streets running east to west, and two running south to north; there were other minor streets also, including one immediately behind and parallel to the southern side of the stockade. The southernmost of the major east-west streets, running slightly north of the present Strand Road, came to be known as the Kaladan, "the street of the foreigners", because most of the foreign merchants lived there. The next east-west road, running along or to the south of modern Merchant Street, was later known as "Pegu Place" by the English, no doubt because the Myowun of Hanthawaddy had his residence and court there; and the northernmost, lying somewhat to the north of Merchant Street, was the Mingala Bazaar. The principal south-north road lay approximately along the line of Barr Street; and the other major parallel road lay on the line of Lewis Street.

In the faces of the stockade were a number of gates; probably three on the south leading to the River and wharfs, two on the north, one on the west, and two on the east, together with a number of small sally-ports.[1]

Around the stockade was water or water-logged land, varied by higher plats of ground covered with low shrubs and brushwood. Rangoon, indeed, presented a very different appearance from today. The Sule Pagoda stood on a small laterite pinnacle, cut off from the town by a morass which covered a great deal of what is now Fytche Square and the area to the west thereof. This morass was linked with the River, the ditch outside the stockade connecting it with the main stream on both east and west. Thus in reality Rangoon stood on a small island, and this no doubt largely accounts for its confined area. Beyond the town, where all is now dry land, were numerous tanks, some of considerable size. West of the town there was a tidal creek near the present Latter Street; and to the east was the Botataung Creek, near modern Creek Street, linking the River with the Pazundaung Creek and so forming another island known as Queen's Island, of the present Pazundaung and Monkey Point area. This island is marked on some old maps as being very definitely cut off from the mainland. Apart from tanks and creeks, the land was so low-lying that most of it was covered with water at high tide and during heavy rain; and this was the case within the town as well as outside it. East and west, towards the distant hamlets of Pazundaung and Kemmendine, the latter being the residence of some of the King's boatmen and the site of a guard-post, the land along the River was little better than a

[1] It is impossible to reconcile the numerous discrepancies in the accounts of different observers. Thus *Symes* describes the town as a square: *Wilson* as "an irregular parallelogram": *Crawfurd* as "an irregular square": *Doveton* as "something of an oval form." Some state that the town was a mile in length, others about nine hundred yards. Similarly there is no agreement about the number of gates in the stockade: *Symes, Buchanan,* and *Wilson* state that there were two gates on the north, and one in each of the other three sides, but *Crawfurd* gives two on the north, two on the east, three on the south, and one on the west, together with a number of sally-ports also. The map of 1824 shows two on the north, three on the east, three on the south, and one on the west. *Crawfurd,* who appears to show greater precision than the rest, has been followed here. It may be observed that no proper survey was made of the town; distances appear to have been merely paced out.

morass, and within the stockade houses had to be built on piles to escape the rising river at high tide and the water with which the place was inundated after every shower. Drains, however, were cut alongside the streets to carry off the water, and planks were laid down along each road so that the foot-passenger might avoid the worst of the wet—except that when two pedestrians met one had to step off into the mud. The drains were not very effective, for the spring tides came up into them and the channels were often full of small fish. In addition, one or two muddy creeks ran up into the town itself and the tide flowed up into them also. As late as 1782 the streets were not paved[1] but in 1795 they were, it is stated, "tolerably well paved with brick,"[2] with a number of wooden bridges over the creeks, these amenities having been provided by a Portuguese who was Shahbandar or Collector of Customs. As wheeled traffic within the city was not permitted, the paving remained in tolerable repair. Nevertheless, it is evident that the town was extremely damp and unwholesome. "The dirtiness of the town and the water mixing with the filth, occasioned dreadful stenches", it was recorded.[3] Dysentery, cholera, and small-pox were common.[4] Yet the accounts of the general health of the town are contradictory. Despite the statements referred to, it was also said that "even during the rains which all over India make the most disagreeable and sticky time of the year, the air, in this place, is temperate, and has an elasticity unknown at the corresponding period in any other part; which gives vigour to the whole animal system, and enables it to support a great degree of fatigue. Perhaps the rapid motion of the tide may account, in some measure, for this unexpected healthiness of the climate".[5] Again "the general salubrity of the air is best evinced by its effects; the inhabitants, male and female, are a hale, robust race; strangers in general preserve their health, or recover soon if they arrive sick".[6] The contradiction perhaps arises from variations in epidemics from year to year. The lack of consistency between the various accounts of the town is also evidenced by the fact that some observers describe the streets as wide and others as narrow, some as dirty and some as clean. In fact they were narrow, only ten or twelve feet wide.[7]

Health was possibly assisted by the practice, indulged in by the European inhabitants if not by others, of bathing in a tank north of the Shwe Dagon; when one William Caldwell was brought to the town in a very low state of health after being cast away in the Gulf of Martaban, a surgeon recommended that "he should remain here for three or four months to take advantage

[1] Hunter: *Description of Pegu*, p. 5. But did Hunter really visit Burma, despite his professions? His account of the Shwe Dagon is borrowed almost verbatim from *Hamilton*, and could hardly have been written by anyone who spent in Rangoon the length of time which Hunter claims to have stayed.

[2] Buchanan: *Burma Journal* (India Office, Home Miscellaneous Series, 687).

[3] *ibid.*

[4] Sangermano: *Description of the Burmese Empire*, p. 134.

[5] Hunter, *op. cit.* p. 7.

[6] Cox: *Journal of a Residence in the Burmhan, Empire*, p. 11.

[7] Bennett: *Rangoon Fifty Years Ago.*

of the Mineral Baths of Rangoon as the most likely remedy of restoring him to Health."[1] This tank, whose waters were "limpid, but austere and acid to the taste", contained natural mineral water, which on rough analysis was found to consist of "a pure chalybeate, containing iron held in solution of the acid of sulphur or vitriolic acid, with a very small proportion of magnesia and muriatic salt".[2] It was commonly known as "the Scotch tank" because, it is ambiguously stated, of "the sulphureous qualities of its water".[3] Perhaps it is to be identified with the tank which figures in the story of Queen Shinsawbu: "when the Queen heard that there was sickness among her subjects she made mixtures of herbs in a lake nearby (the Pagoda) and caused her subjects to take the medicine".[4]

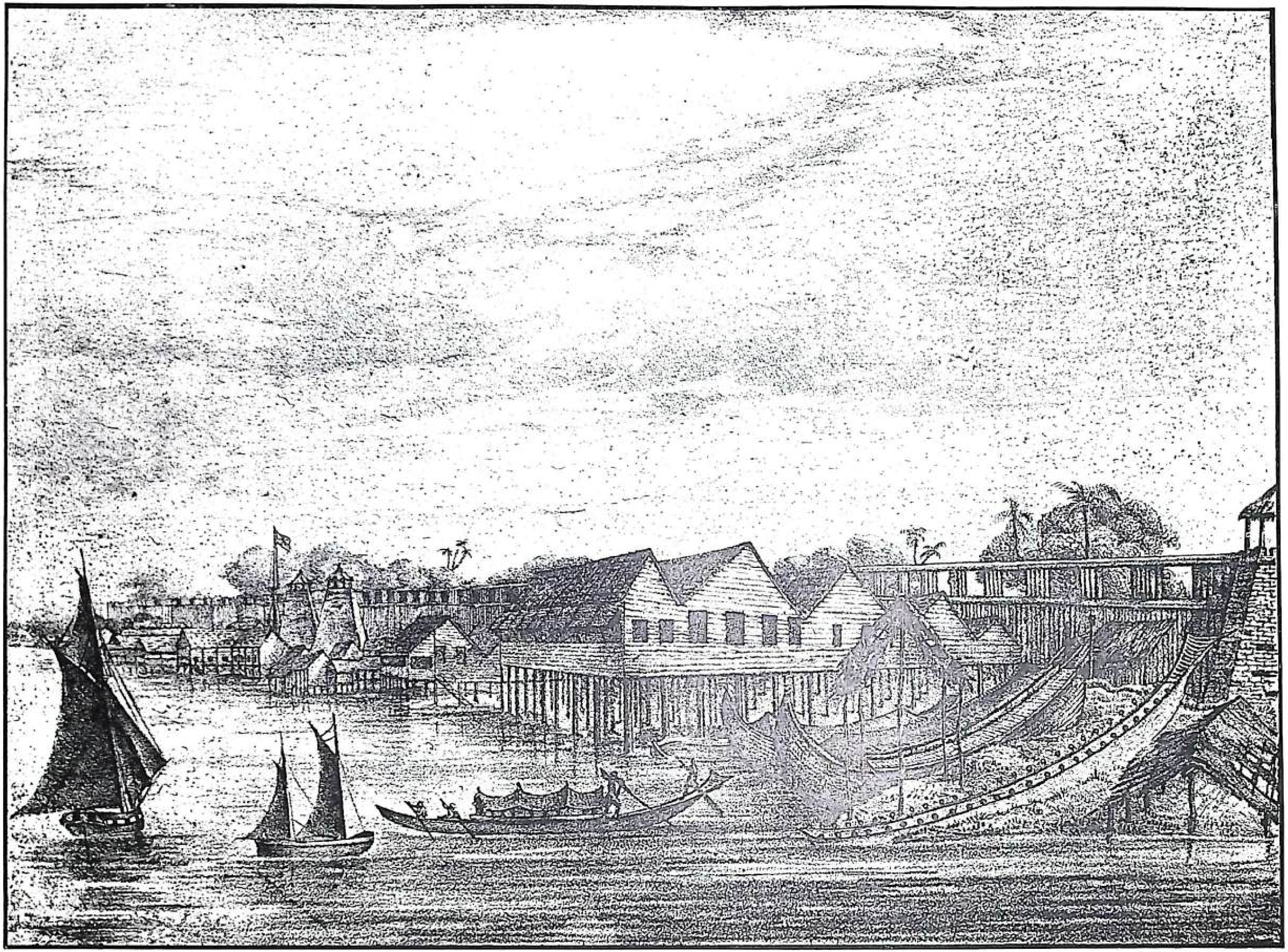
For drinking-water the town was dependent on wells, the best of which were outside the stockade, for within it the wells tended to become impregnated with river water. The most potable water was obtained from a well, north of the stockade, known to the Europeans as "Rebecca's Well" because "here at all times of the day, and often at night, would be found with their earthen water-pots the maidens of the town, for water and gossip. The well was famous then as now for its excellent water, and was almost the only well from which the people in the stockade had their drinking water."[5]

In general aspect the town must have been not unlike a modern Burmese village. The houses were nearly all built of bamboo-matting with thatched roofs. The space underneath the floor, between the piles on which the house was raised, became a depository for filth and a home for animals and fowls. One writer unkindy states that "the fowls, ducks, pigs, and pariah dogs.............added to the inmates of the house, place it on a par with an Irish hovel".[6] Another observer says that "the space beneath is invariably a receptacle for dirt and stagnant water, from which, during the heat of the day, pestilential vapours constantly ascend."[7] "The City" wrote one observer,[8] "appeared to me very strange, and such wretched houses I thought I never saw, though they are built with wood. Dogs, rats, hogs, and all manner of vermin, are certainly very numerous, but not more so than they are in a native town in Bengal. Houses are raised two, three, four, or five feet from the ground, and all underneath is hollow, and filled with all manner of rubbish and filth of the house and family, which these animals feed upon and live among." The number of ownerless swine and dogs which wandered about the town and played the part of public scavengers was frequently commented on by travellers: "Heaps of meagre swine, the disgusting scavengers

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1 Imperial Record Department, *Public Proceedings* 25th September, 1789.
2 Cox, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
3 Snodgrass, *op. cit.*, p. 107.
4 *Shwedagon Thamaing.*
5 Bennett: *Rangoon Fifty Years Ago.*
6 Trant: *Two Years in Ava*, p. 26.
7 Snodgrass: *Narrative of the Burmese War*, p. 14.
8 Felix Carey, quoted *Felix Carey and the English Baptist Mission in Burma.*

PLATE No. 2



Grierson: *Twelve Select Views of the Seat of War.*

RANGOON FROM THE RIVER, 1824

of the town, infest the streets by day; and at night they are relieved by packs of hungry dogs".[1]

Timber houses were few, and brick houses even fewer. It was illegal for a Burmese subject to build a brick house, for it was feared that such buildings might become centres of resistance against the authorities; but no restriction was placed on the materials used by European residents for their buildings, provided that they obtained prior permission and paid a heavy tax; though in general the Europeans preferred timber houses "not from any want of brick or lime, but because the wooden houses are more adapted to the dampness of the climate. Such few brick buildings as do exist, are used more as magazines than as dwelling-houses."[2] It would appear, however, that the true reason for the preference for timber houses was the poor workmanship of the builders; "even these buildings are erected so very badly, that they have more the appearance of prisons than habitations. Strong iron bars usurp the place of windows, and the only communication between the upper and lower storeys is by means of wooden steps placed outside."[3] Symes, in 1795, noted that the two-storeyed Custom House, which lay more or less on the site of the present-day new Law Courts, was the only lay building in the town constructed of brick. Apart from the Custom House, the principal buildings were the residence of the Myowun, which lay approximately on modern Merchant Street between Lewis Street and Sparks Street, and the Yondaw, the public court, which lay opposite it on the south side of the Pegu Place. Both of these buildings were made of timber.[4]

Outside the stockade on the river bank were three wooden wharfs, with steps leading down to the water. The principal wharf, the King's Wharf, which was graced by a tiled roof, lay more or less where Barr Street Jetty now is. There was only one jetty, and that built of timber; it was part of the King's Wharf, and unlike the remaining two wharves enabled ships to load and unload without the use of sampans. Near the main wharf were two large wooden sheds which were used as an exchange by the merchants, who met there in the cool of the morning and evening to transact business. The Custom House within the stockade was also a place of public resort. Close by the King's Wharf stood a battery of guns, mounted behind a wooden breastwork, the guns being run out through ports like the ports in the side of a ship.[5] A flagstaff stood near by. Higher up the River, beyond the limits of the town, the China Wharf developed; the name was derived from the Chinese who lived in the suburb there.

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[1] Snodgrass: *op. cit.* p. 14.

[2] Sangermano, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

[3] Trant: *op. cit.* p. 26.

[4] Symes: *Embassy to Ava*, p. 160.

[5] Statements of the strength of the battery vary: *Cox* gives sixteen four- or six-pounders: *Buchanan* mentions ten or twelve guns.

See Plate No. 2 — *Rangoon from the River*, and No. 5 — *Rangoon from the Anchorage;* and compare No. 34 for the waterfront today.

There were three principal exits from the town other than those leading to the waterside. On the west a road crossed the ditch and ran across the marshy land and the creeks towards Kemmendine, passing through the village of "Shotee rua, possessed by a kind of soldiers named Laynoza, who hold their lands by military tenure, are supposed never to run away in battle and are distinguished by having the lower part of their bellies tattoed."[1] Along this road the land towards the River was partially cultivated with paddy, with shrubs elsewhere; away from the River was thick jungle. On the north of the town two roads ran towards the Shwe Dagon Pagoda. The westernmost road, an extension of the town road on the line of modern Barr Street, passed out through the Execution or Death Gate, so called because all dead bodies and condemned criminals were taken that way, the latter going towards the Execution Ground which lay north of Dalhousie Street between China Street and Edwards Street. The Death Gate lay on the site of the modern High Court, near Fytche Square. On the left of this westernmost road, shortly outside the town, was a wooden causeway crossing the swamp to the Sule Pagoda.[2] The road then bore westwards and linked up with the Pagoda Road which ran northward from the China Wharf to the Shwe Dagon, at first on the line of Edwards Street, later on the line of the present Pagoda Road. The easternmost road, which was an extension of the town road corresponding with modern Lewis Street, passed out through the Wungyi's gate and was known as the Wungyi's Road; the name was derived from the circumstance that the town road of which the Wungyi's Road was the extension ran past the Myowun's residence. This road ran from the gate in a direction slightly west of north and at about the point where the Scots Kirk now stands came on to the line of the modern Signal Pagoda Road and so to the Pagoda. These roads were both paved with bricks by a Muslim merchant who turned Buddhist.[3] As in the sixteenth century they were lined with *sedis* and *zayats*. Along these roads, "the stranger may indeed expect to meet with something new at every step. Monasteries for instance loaded with ornaments, delicately carved in wood, consisting of figures resembling angels, men, women, monkeys, horses, elephants, birds, and beasts of a hundred shapes, with a vast number of hideous and nondescript creatures, grouped together in a most absurd and grotesque manner. As we proceed further among the numerous temples and shrines, we find them more and more crowded with 'all monstrous, all prodigious things'; at every turning some 'grim figure' presents itself."[4] On the east a minor road ran to Dunneedaw and Pazundaung.[5] It was "circuitous, and for nearly half a mile carried over a wooden causeway, dangerous and insecure in the extreme, passable only by foot passengers or by equestrians at great risk."[6]

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[1] Buchanan *op. cit. Laynosa — lenyotha* or archer.
[2] See Plate No. 3 — *A Pagoda near Rangoon,* showing the Sule Pagoda and the wooden causeway.
[3] See Plate No. 4 — *The Principal Approach to the Great Pagoda,* 1824, showing the brick paving.
[4] Grierson: *Twelve Select Views of the Seat of War.*
[5] *Pazundaung* — generally derived from *pusun* (the cancer species of fish) + *htaung* (to trap).
Dunneedaw — from *dani* (toddy palm, the leaves of which are used for thatching) + *taw* (forest).
[6] Keighley: *Report on the City of Rangoon.*

The main road beyond the Pagoda ran on the line of the present Windermere Road, across the low-lying ground which is now covered by the Victoria Lake, and subsequently along the bottom of the eastern slope of the ridge where the Prome Road now runs, through Tadagale and Tadagyi. This road was no better than a rough cart-track. Apart from this, there were paths through the jungle area outside the town, but these were hardly passable except by pedestrians.

The town quickly outgrew the narrow limits within which it was first designed, but it extended along the river-bank to the west, not to any extent northwards, and not much eastwards where the ground was even more swampy than on the west.[1] West of the stockade there grew up, along the modern Strand between Maung Khine and Mogul Streets, a suburb known as Tatgale,[2] or Tackley as it was anglicised. Here a populous area appeared, inhabited mainly by workmen connected with the ships and by prostitutes. Merchants and ships' officers lived inside the stockade. It appears that houses were also erected between the stockade and the River, for there is a reference to "the large suburb lying between the stockade and the river, and the still larger one of Tacklay."[3] Among the numerous tanks to the north of the stockade, where all is now covered with streets and buildings, were "gardens and orchards abounding in mangoe, jack, coco, and other tropical fruit trees, whilst from amid their grateful shade were seen the many picturesque Chinese-looking buildings, termed kioums or monasteries"[4]. There were also a number of burial-grounds, such as the Armenian cemetery, not far from the north face of the stockade.[5] As the ground rose towards the laterite ridge it became covered by jungle. There was much jungle also west of the Shwe Dagon, covering the present golf-course, the Government House area, and Ahlone; "the whole space between the western face of Shwe-da-gong and the left bank of the Rangoon river is covered by the densest forest."[6] In these jungles wild animals abounded, elephant and tiger among others; the tigers would come up to the stockade around the town in hope of seizing pariah dogs and one case is even recorded where a tiger was found within the stockade.[7] To the east of the Shwe Dagon lay the lakes known as the Kandawgyi and the Kandawgale, and beyond these the swamps verging on the Pazundaung Creek.

Across the River lay the town of Maingthu, where now Dalla stands. It was a moderate-sized place, "one long street",[8] and was the residence of

[1] See Plate No. 10 — *Scene from the Upper Terrace of the Great Pagoda*, showing the Monkey Point area.

[2] "The small guard-post."

[3] Crawfurd, *op. cit.* II. p. 38.

[4] Doveton: *Reminiscences of the Burmese War*, p. 31.

[5] See Appendix E: *The Armenian Cemetery*.

[6] Havelock: *Memoirs of the Three Campaigns*. See Plate No. 7 — *The Great Pagoda and Scenery Adjoining*; the view is taken from the neighbourhood of the present Voyle Road.

[7] Gouger: *Personal Narrative of Two Years' Imprisonment*, p. 315.

[8] Symes *op. cit.* p. 215.

the Governor of the province of Dalla, for Twante had now lost its importance and with the rise of Rangoon the provincial capital of Dalla had been attracted thereto. One part of Maingthu, the Meinma Shwe Ywa, was inhabited exclusively by prostitutes. As it was the capital of the province, Maingthu came to be called by the province's own name, and as early as 1795 was beginning to be known as Dalla[1].

The town of Rangoon came within the jurisdiction of the Myowun of Hanthawaddy, commonly known to the Europeans of the time as the Viceroy or Governor of Pegu or of Rangoon; after 1790 he was accustomed to divide his time between these two towns, and in his absence Rangoon was under the charge of the Yewun. The powers of the Myowun were extensive; he was, as one holder of the office told Symes, "vested with authority to adjust every matter that related to" the province; he had judicial as well as executive authority, and in criminal causes he and he alone had the power of life and death, though in civil suits an appeal lay to the Hlutdaw at the capital. In executive and in judicial matters alike he was assisted by the advice of a council formed of his principal subordinates, but he appears to have had the final voice, for it is said that no matter was settled contrary to his opinion. Once a year he was required to visit the Court to render an account of his stewardship.

The second officer in the province was the Yewun, "the minister of the water", the title being conferred on the deputy-governor of a maritime province without any necessary reference to maritime duties. The Yewun was primarily a judicial officer and cases other than those of major importance came before him. Cases of gravity came before the Myowun aided by his Council.

The third officer was the Sitke, and the title of Sitke is generously defined by the dictionary as "a lieutenant-general; a magistrate." Actually the Sitke appears to have been primarily a police officer, for he is defined elsewhere as a "Conservator of the Peace".[2]

There was also an Akaukwun or Collector of Customs, usually known to Europeans as the Shahbandar. There was an Akunwun, or Collector of Revenue, who received the taxes for the whole of the province, the Akaukwun having no jurisdiction outside the port. Other officials were the Nakhan, or "Public Informer",[3] whom Cox described as a "reporter;"[4] the Head Clerk; the Secretary; and the Aweyauk, or officer to whom the arrival of strangers had to be reported. These officers were accustomed to assemble daily for the despatch of business in the Yondaw or Royal Court, where all royal orders were read and local affairs were discussed. They were supported by a small

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[1] Buchanan *op. cit.*

[2] Crawfurd, in *Home Miscellaneous Series* 674/10

[3] *ibid.*

[4] *op. cit.* p. 2.

force of troops, some four or five hundred in number, under the command of the Sitke; the troops were armed with condemned East India Company muskets bought up by speculators and sold in Burma.[1]

There were in addition a number of official interpreters, whose services the foreign merchants and sailors were required to employ in the transaction of their business; complaints were sometimes made of the dishonesty of these "licensed linguists" and after a time permission was given to employ interpreters without restriction.

The authority of the Myowun and his council extended over the whole province of Pegu or Hanthawaddy, not merely over the town of Rangoon; "all the causes and government business which arose, I reported to the royal court at Rangoon and settled in accordance with the instructions sent me", stated the Headman of Ma U township in the Census returns of 1802. Similarly the record of Kawliya township in the Census of 1783 states that fees were paid "to the revenue writers and Akunwun of Rangoon town .... If there is a Myosa or Ywasa, one half of the revenue is paid to him, one half is taken for my own use. If there is no myosa or ywasa, one half is paid to the Viceroy at Rangoon ...... Criminal cases of theft, murder, and arson, are sent to the court at Rangoon town."[2]

These various officers who constituted the local government, far removed from the capital and enjoying a wide measure of authority, were almost completely uncontrolled, except when they quarrelled among themselves and conducted intrigues against one another which produced intervention from above. Not infrequently the Yewun would intrigue against the Myowun in the hope of displacing him, and each would form a faction among the subordinate officials and the towns folk, so producing conditions in which violent outbreaks seemed hardly to be avoided.

The officials were Burmese with the exception of the Akaukwun, who was almost invariably a foreigner, the office being the highest that a foreigner could aspire to, and occasionally the Akunwun who was at one time an Armenian. The reason for the employment of non-Burmans in the office of Akaukwun was that a foreigner was likely to have a better knowledge of trading conditions and shipping than could a Burman. Thus for many years the Akaukwun was a Portuguese, Joseph Xavier da Cruz, commonly known as Jaunsi, who first appeared in Burma in 1760 and was still employed by the Burmese Government as late as 1804. He was, it would seem, typical of the adventurers who frequented the Burmese ports; he had been gunner on an English merchant vessel, had murdered his captain, and come to Burma with his plunder. He settled down as a respectable citizen, became Akaukwun, married the widow of a Frenchman who had served in the royal guard, and was largely responsible for paving the streets of the town and erecting the jetty at the King's Wharf. At another time one Baba Sheen, born in Burma

[1] Doveton, *op. cit.* p. 22.
[2] *Hanthawaddy Sittans.*

of Armenian parents, held the office. Later it was held by an Englishman, Rogers, a native of Windsor, who had been an officer on an East Indiaman, had assaulted his superior, and had fled from Bengal to Burma to avoid the consequences of his crime, about the year 1780; being destitute and pressed by creditors, he became the slave of the Prince of Prome, the King's second son; he adopted Burmese dress and customs, and, prospering in trade, became Akaukwun. He had a rival in the person of Lanciego,[1] a Spaniard who had command of a privateer during the wars of the French Revolution, and had settled in Rangoon as a trader; then he married a daughter of the Akaukwun Jaunsi, and became Akaukwun himself in course of time. Thereafter the office alternated between Lanciego and Rogers according to the fortunes of their friends at the Court. Such were the foreigners who were employed by the Burmese Government. It may be noted that foreigners were employed at other ports also in the office of Akaukwun.

The officials received no regular salary, but lived on the fees which they were authorised to charge and on a share of the taxes. Fees were levied, for example, in connection with the administration of justice, in general to the extent of ten per cent of the amount involved in the litigation; and in general of all imposts half went to the King's treasury and half to the officials, except when the King had appointed a favourite or relative as myosa of a district to enjoy half the revenues from it. But the officials augmented their incomes by impositions of dubious legality; and this is not surprising, for when the King wanted to extend his patronage he would double or treble the number of offices; thus at times in Rangoon there were two Yewuns, two Sitkes, two Nahkans, two Head Clerks, two Secretaries, and even two Akaukwuns.[2] And since all the office-holders wanted fees, extortion became the rule. Many complaints were made of the extortions of officials; when suits were tried, the officials would exact fees from both sides, often to the extent of three or four times the value of the object of the litigation. Not infrequently subordinate officials would arrogate to themselves judicial authority and keep what were called in Rangoon "justice shops" where "justice" was sold to the highest bidder; "these numerous tribunals are an endless source of gratification to the litigious, of fees and presents to the judge and others employed on the occasion. It is true, in case of grievance, redress may be had from the Viceroy, but the expense, and the fees attending such an appeal generally equal, if not exceed, the sum for which it is made." The peons attendant on each officer, moreover, made it their business to encourage unnecessary litigation, since they shared the fortunes of their master. These abuses, however, arose only under the rule of a weak Myowun; a strong Myowun would require all cases to be brought to the Yondaw.[3] When, however, a Myowun was removed from office, the interim between his departure and the arrival of his successor was

[1] The form *Lanciago* is also found and is probably
[2] Crawfurd, *op. cit.* p. 141; *Home Miscellaneous Series*, 674/1041; Saya Thein, *Old Rangoon.*
[3] *Bengal Secret and Political Consultations*, 5th July 1804, No. 125.

utilised by the subordinate officers in encouraging appeals by litigants for revision of the late Myowun's judicial decisions, so that they obtained fees and presents for hearing cases anew.[1]

The officials further augmented their incomes by engaging in private trade; in 1811 it was recorded that the Myowun had "recourse to extensive speculations in trade. Indeed, he makes no secret of declaring that his chief ambition is to be accounted the first merchant in the country". One consequence of this practise was that illegal monopolies were established and it is curiously stated that "as a profitable branch of revenue he had in particular monopolized the supply of coffins in Rangoon at a considerably advanced price".[2]

Sometimes civil justice was administered by ordeal, a case of ordeal by water where the court was unable to arrive at a decision being recorded;[3] and another case where a dispute was determined by the ordeal of burning candles, the owner of the candle which burnt out first being adjudged to have sworn falsely, is also mentioned.[4]

Taxation was both irregular and heavy. There were, it is true, some permanent taxes; thus there was a capitation tax fixed nominally at Rs. 12 per annum on each household of whatever rank or wealth; but the assessment was sometimes arbitrarily varied by the Myowun and was occasionally as much as Rs. 300 in the case of wealthy foreigners. There was also a tax on certain fruit trees at the rate of one-quarter of a rupee on each areca and palmyra tree, one-eighth of a rupee on each mango, jack and marian tree, and one-sixteenth on each betel vine. This tax was levied only on bearing trees. A tax was levied on fishing boats, varying from Rs. 15 to Rs. 25 according to size. Goods coming to market were taxed: *e.g.* each boat bringing ngapi to market had to pay, irrespective of the ngapi it contained, ten tickals to the revenue, two to the Myowun, two to the Myowun's clerks, two to his messengers, two for his personal expenses, three to the myothugyi, and one and a half to the myothugi's clerk. The *pwe sas* who, in the absence of coined money, adjudged the fineness of the bars of precious metal which were used as a medium of exchange, were taxed one tickal of pure silver on each pair of bellows which they used. There was also in Rangoon, though not, it seems, in other parts of the country, a tax of ten per cent on the wages of artisans and others connected with the commerce of the port, such as porters, boatmen, wharf-labourers, carpenters, and caulkers.

But there were also irregular exactions, such as the fee which one Myowun is said to have required before he would permit any burial to take place; and any extraordinary expenditure which the government might incur, such as the building of a pagoda, or the levying of a foreign war, would be made the occasion

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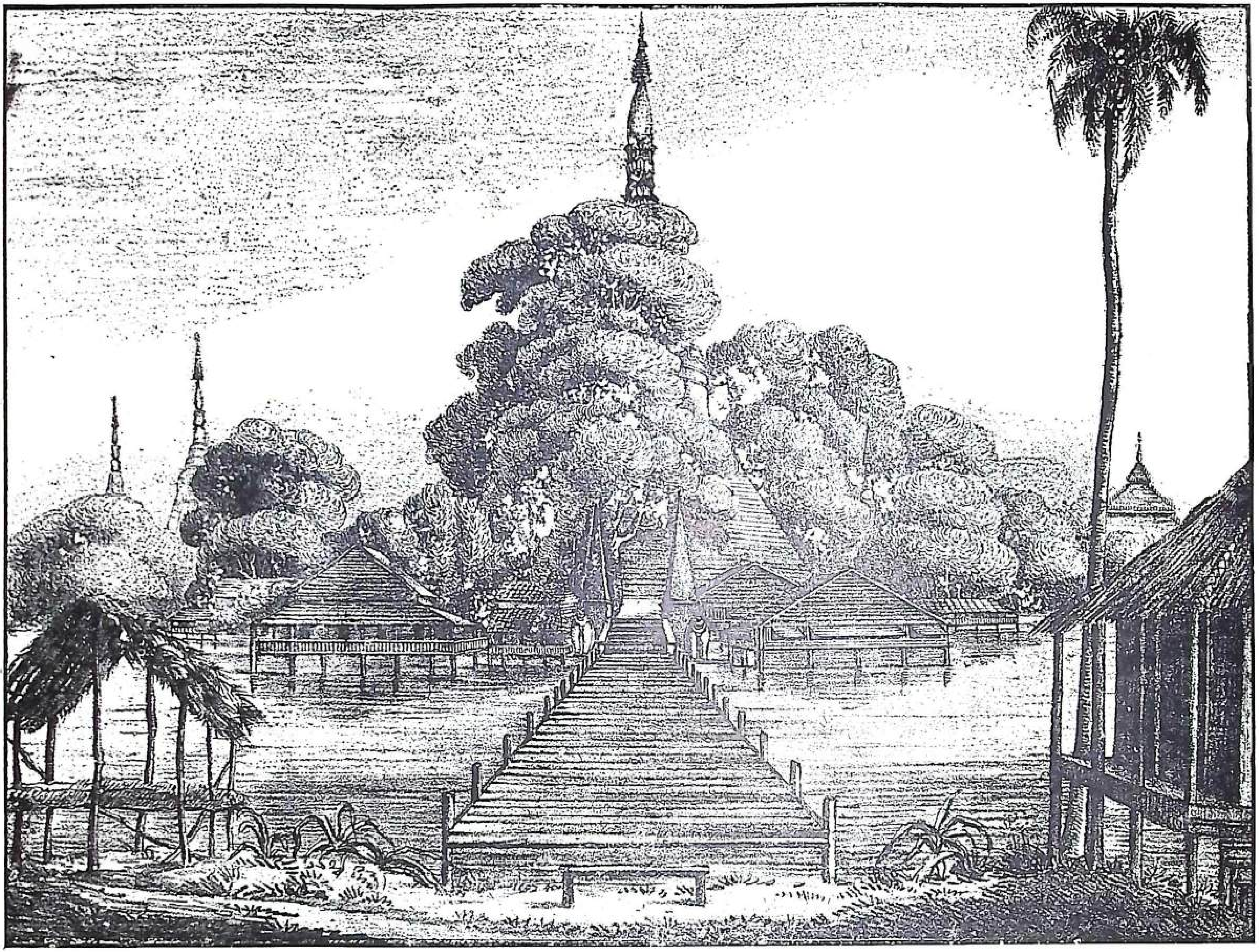
[1] *ibid.*
[2] *ibid.*, 26th December, 1811, No. 6.
[3] Symes, *op. cit.* p. 467.
[4] Cox, *op. cit.* p. 14.

for a special tax. "It is in Rangoon, perhaps, beyond every other city of the Empire, that these exactions are carried to the greatest height. For besides the continual imposts for the repairs of the walls, etc., this city is exposed to numerous other taxes from its situation. Thus should an ambassador arrive from a foreign court, the inhabitants must furnish every thing necessary for his maintenance and that of his suite, and not only this, but must also defray all his expenses on his journey up the river to the capital. Again, whenever a white elephant is taken, to them it belongs to conduct it to Amarapura. The misery caused by these taxes is also increased by the unequal method of their distribution; for it is not the possessions but the number of persons in a family that is taken into consideration. Hence it will often happen that a rich merchant and a poor artizan will have to furnish the same sum; and a fine house, built of wood, and containing, besides the family of the master, a great number of slaves, will be rated no higher than a miserable cabin of cane or bamboo thatched with straw, and frequently not worth the money that is demanded. This city, being situated at a great distance from the court, is more exposed to their rapacity; and being the principal sea-port of the kingdom, where numbers of foreigners flock with their merchandise, the inhabitants have more opportunity of gain, and thus furnish a richer harvest for the avarice of their rulers".[1] It was said that when such extraordinary taxes were levied, a contribution of two or three times the amount actually needed was exacted, the surplus going into the pockets of the officials.[2]

Despite the heavy exactions of the officials, the taxpayer received little protection. Theft and robbery were endemic, even in the Fort itself, and little was done to check it. The obligation to prevent crime rested not on the authorities but on the citizen. Thus an order was issued that every house-owner should be responsible for the arrest of any thief who entered his house: a sum of fifty rupees which a poor woman had received by selling her daughter into slavery and which she needed to pay a debt, was stolen from her house; when she reported the matter at the Yondaw she was called upon to produce the thief, and could release herself from this obligation only by bribery. Again a cat stole some fish, and, the fact becoming known, the owner of the fish was called upon to produce the cat and had to pay a fine in consequence of his inability to do so.[3] The result was that the inhabitants endured theft in silence rather than seek redress. Crime continued to be common, and even the European merchants in their comparatively strongly-built houses within the stockade guarded their windows with iron bars and kept watchdogs; while in the suburbs dacoities sometimes took place on a large scale; a resident wrote, "Our ears are continually assailed with the intelligence of robberies and murders. Last night a band of fifteen or twenty attacked a house very near the one we had just left, and, after stabbing the owner, robbed the house of every-

[1] Sangermano, p. 74.
[2] *Home Miscellaneous Series*, 674/1041.
[3] Sangermano, p. 76 sqq.

PLATE No. 3



Grierson: Twelve Select Views of the Seat of War.

A PAGODA NEAR RANGOON, 1824.

thing they could find. The robbers were armed with large knives, spears, and guns, which put all the people around in such fear, that none dared go to the assistance of the sufferers . . . . The viceroy is very much enraged at this daring attempt, and has sent one of his principal officers, with three hundred men, in search of the perpetrators".[1] Although law and order were so feebly maintained, the town was divided into eight wards each under a headman whose duty it was "to maintain watch and ward within his division".[2]

There were strict municipal regulations for the prevention of fire, and these were highly necessary in view of the ease with which fire might completely destroy a town built almost exclusively of bamboo and timber. Thus every dry weather all thatch had to be removed from the roofs of houses, and might not be replaced until the next rains broke, though roofs of matting were tolerated; pots of water had to be kept in each house to put out any conflagration, and at all seasons every house-holder had to kept a long bamboo with a hook at the end to pull off the thatch in the event of fire, with a split bamboo as well so as to beat out any flames. A special body of police was always ready to extinguish any fire that might break out; and heavy punishment was inflicted on those responsible for an outbreak. On one occasion an old man of seventy years who accidentally caused a fire, was fined Rs. 800, marched round the town with a fire-brand hung round his neck, and at each street corner received so many blows with a bamboo. Not only did a house-owner have to pay a fine if his own house were burnt, but under some circumstances he was liable to be punished if his neighbour's house were burnt; for when a building was completely consumed, the owners of the four buildings on either side were fined, the object being to induce the inhabitants of the town to assist each other when a fire broke out.

During the hot months of March, April and May, when in the daytime strong gusts of wind are liable to occur, all fires had to be put out by 10 a.m. and might not be relit till 4 p.m.; and to avoid danger at night fires had to be extinguished again by 8 p.m. Patrols went round the streets to enforce this regulation. But despite all these precautions fires sometimes occurred.

Other regulations forbade the killing and eating of meat; but these were not always strictly enforced. At all times it was illegal for Burmans to eat flesh, but at some periods venison, fowls, and fish were freely sold to foreigners in the markets. The use of beef was, however, strictly prohibited, and when the officers of a French ship were discovered to have bought a calf and killed it they were fined Rs. 800. The use of alcoholic liquors and of opium was also illegal on pain of death, and drunkenness was liable to be punished by pouring molten lead down the throat of the offender. But there is evidence that the enforcement of these regulations was sporadic, and depended largely

[4] A. H. Judson: *Narrative of the American Baptist Mission*, p. 30.

[5] Crawfurd, *op. cit.* p. 51.

on the whim of the Myowun and his officers. Non-Burmans appear often to have been able to secure wines and spirits by paying fees or excess import-dues, and in the case of non-Burmans drunkenness was on occasion punished only by beating, although one instance is recorded in which a European sea-captain was sentenced to death for providing spirits to a number of Burmans; the sentence was, however, remitted. At one period general permission was given to all men to drink spirits, and the demand became so great that an English envoy was compelled to send his ship back to Calcutta to replenish its supplies, since he did not wish to give offence by refusing the numerous requests for free drinks. One Myowun endeavoured to turn these circumstances to his own advantage; a ship arrived in the port with a cargo of rum which the captain expected to dispose of at Rs. 10 or more a gallon; the Myowun promptly issued an order prohibiting the use of spirits in the hope of thus compelling the captain to sell him the rum at about Rs. 2 a gallon; but the captain refused. On the other hand, the receipt of news at the capital that a Myowun was allowing his soldiers to drink spirits and smoke opium was enough to secure his suspension from office. Thus the enforcement of the law regarding the consumption of spirits varied from time to time. Similarly Europeans were on occasion permitted to break the law against gambling on payment of ten per cent of the stakes to the Myowun.[1]

In general the administration of criminal justice was harsh in the extreme. The punishments inflicted astonished European observers, accustomed as they were to the severity of the penal systems of their own countries, by their ferocity; for impalement, mutilation, crucifixion, disembowelment, were by no means uncommonly witnessed at the Execution Ground, and the innocent members of a criminal's family often suffered along with the guilty. Some moderation was, however, imposed by the influence of the pongyis, who on occasion intervened to secure a reprieve from the Myowun; and one case is recorded where a Christian missionary was able to induce the Myowun to pardon a man condemned to crucifixion.[2] It was stated that "the severity and frequent cruelty of the punishments .... were necessary to keep the Burmans in awe under the present system of Government, which authorizing plunder and rapine in its own officers, may be easily conceived to set a pernicious example to others who, to subsist, are obliged to have recourse to similar methods."[3]

Despite the prevalence of crime, the authorities could enforce law and order when they felt inclined to do so; even the foreign sailors, not the most docile of men, behaved themselves in Rangoon, and when the mutinous crew of an

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[1] For these municipal regulations, see Cordier: *les Français en Birmanie;* Crawfurd, *op. cit.; Bengal Secret and Political Consultations* 5th September, 1804. No. 125; 29th May, 1810, No. 1; 26th December, 1811, No. 6; 21st February, 1812 No. 30; 26th December, 1812, No. 1.

[2] *Felix Carey and the English Baptist Mission in Burma.*

[3] *Bengal Secret and Political Consultations,* 20th May, 1805, No. 440.

English ship came to the port, they gave no trouble at all for the two months of their stay.[1]

As Rangoon was the major port of Burma, there were strict regulations relating to pilotage. Even in the days of Syriam there had been some system of pilots,[2] and after the establishment of Rangoon as a port the system was elaborated. No ship might lawfully pass the mouth of the River without a pilot, whether entering or leaving; and if no pilot were immediately available, the ship entering had to anchor in seven fathoms of water by the bar while a boat was sent up to obtain one. Burmese records of the Census of 1802 give details of the system: "At the watchposts at Danu and Mibya, because they are at the entrance to the way where leave and enter ships and sampans from foreign lands and islands, they have to keep unceasing watch day and night with beacons, so that they may know of them. Whether ship or sampan if they would enter within the royal harbour they have to cast anchor in seven fathoms of water. The river pilot has to go by sampan into the Mibya watch post and Danu watch post. When the sampan arrives the men of the watch post have to accompany it and inform the officers of the Myowun. The officers of the Myowun depute a pilot and he goes with the men of the watch post to meet the vessel and bring it up." The terms of the Census taken in conjunction with other evidence suggest that normally the river pilot was picked up at the River bar, where the old charts mark the anchorage ground in seven fathoms of water; the pilot apparently came out from Mibya, commonly called the Queen's Chokey, in a pilot-boat to board the vessel, and then took her up to the second guard-post. This was originally on the left bank of the River, near the present Battery Point; but the water off the shore there seems to have silted up, and the Great Chokey as sailors called it was replaced by the New Chokey on the opposite bank, near the pagoda of Danot or, as the Sittan calls it, Danu. This was frequently referred to as the King's Chokey. Here word was sent to the Yondaw which, having given permission for the ship to enter the port, deputed another pilot to bring her up to the Rangoon reach. Some distinction was thus drawn, it would seem, as today, between river-pilots and harbour-masters.

The system, however, sometimes broke. On occasion no pilot was available at Mibya. One case is recorded where a ship waited two days off the bar, hoisting signals and firing guns to attract attention; but receiving no reply sent a pinnace to go up the River as far as Rangoon if it did not find a pilot sooner. But then the wind changing, the captain "ventured to stand in; and steering by land-marks, and sending a boat ahead, crossed the bar without a pilot, at half flood, in four fathoms." But when the vessel came off the Mibya watch-post it was stopped by a guard-boat and required to anchor until a pilot could be procured from the town.[3] Other cases also are recorded where, in the

[1] Hunter *op. cit.* p. 25.
[2] Symes *op. cit.* p. 31.
[3] Symes. *op. cit.* p. 140-1.

absence of a pilot, the ship's captain took the vessel up the River himself.[1] But in no case might a vessel proceed beyond the Danot watchpost without pilotage, and severe penalties might be imposed for a breach of this regulation.

There were other port regulations which were equally strictly enforced. The Burmese record continues: "On arrival at the royal wharf, after casting anchor the captain and the ship's officer (? mate) go up and are questioned in the custom house. Then they go to the Royal Court House with the interpreters and file a list showing the captain, ship's officers, and lascars, and the cannon, guns, powder, lead, shot, and all their goods for sale, and their clothes. They have to dismast the vessel and take out the ropes and sails. Guards are placed above and below the vessel to keep watch on it carefully. When they have placed the merchandise and clothes in the custom house the interpreters and appraisers and commissioners go up on board the vessel together with the officials and search it." Thus as soon as the ship was at anchor off the King's Wharf, the captain or other officer had to go ashore and, having been searched at the custom house, went to the Yondaw to declare the nationality of the ship, its port of departure, and its contents, a distinction being made between the goods for sale and the private property of the crew. If later any goods were found on board that had not been declared, they would be treated as contraband. The number of persons on board, particularly women, had to be reported, and when the ship was about to depart it was inspected and any women on board in excess of those reported were liable to be seized as slaves, while heavy fines would be imposed on the captain and the ship; for it was illegal for female subjects to leave the country. Further, as a measure of precaution, all guns, muskets, and ammunition must be landed, and, to render the ship the more helpless and incapable of departing against the will of the authorities, the masts, sails, and the rudder also, had to be unshipped. This equipment was only returned when the ship had completed its business and had received permission to sail. The contents of the ship, as declared, were then landed and deposited in the custom house, and after that the ship was inspected by the customs officials, who were often accompanied by the Myowun. The Myowun had to be treated to a repast, while his subordinates roamed all over the ship and helped themselves to any food they could lay their hands on. If the officials noticed any article that had not been declared, it would be confiscated, especially any silver goods, for though silver paid no duty it had to be declared if over Rs. 20 in value, the object being to ensure that no more silver was taken away from the port than was brought in, for the export of the precious metals was prohibited. Presents were given to the Myowun, such as a piece of porcelain, tea and sugar. Until all these preliminaries had been completed no business could be transacted. But some of the requirements, such as landing the sails and rudder, could generally be evaded by judicious bribery, while it was

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[1] *e.g., Bengal Secret and Political Consultations*, 20th June, 1805, No. 440. Gouger: *Narrative of Two Years Imprisonment*, p. 80.

customary to waive the law regarding the landing of equipment in the case of East India Company's vessels engaged in official business.

The rate of import duty is said to have been a fixed charge of 10 per cent ad valorem, plus a fee of 2½ per cent for the officials; while the export duty was at the rate of 5 per cent, plus a fee of 1 per cent; but ship's stores paid only half the normal rate of duty. The duty might be levied in money or in kind at the option of the officials, but since the only money in Burma was foreign currency the officials generally preferred to take the duty in kind. This was inconvenient for the merchants, for often their goods were damaged. The usual method was to count nine pieces and set the next aside for the revenue; the nine pieces would then be stamped to show that duty had been paid. But if necessary an article might be divided so as to obtain the necessary tenth and, of course the percentage due to the officials. Thus pieces of cloth would be torn or a fragment would be cut off a length of rope; and in this way a heterogeneous mass of goods was collected and was taken annually by the Akaukwun to the King's capital.

The rate of duty seems, however, to have been more flexible than has generally been supposed, for in 1810 certain missionaries were charged 7 per cent on silver dollars imported, though it appears from other accounts that silver was duty-free, and 15 per cent on wine.[1] Possibly the customs officials were taking advantage of the innocent, for the *Sittan* states plainly that "of the goods deposited within the royal customs house when the officials have taken full and careful account of them the tenth part is taken as duty and presented to the King." The only exceptions mentioned in the *Sittan* are precious stones, of which it is said that "if there are diamonds or emeralds or pearls of peculiar excellence, they are stamped with a seal and taken on duty for the King." As complaints were not infrequently made by merchants of unlawful exactions, it is possible that on this, as on other occasions, the importers of the silver and wine were compelled to pay more than the authorized percentage. On the other hand, it also appears that the rate of duty was at this period increasing, for in 1812 it was stated that "the regular and known amount of the duties on all goods imported in Rangoon a few years ago was 10 per cent, which has by degrees been raised to 17. Nor is it probable that the amount will stop there, one of these causes that have raised the duties to the abovementioned sum being grants of 1 and ½ per cent on all goods imported, to two persons lately sent down from Court."[2] It is thus evident that the rate of customs duty varied from time to time.

Apart from customs duties certain fees were payable by shipping. "This," says the *Sittan*, "is the gift to announce the arrival of the vessel to the King: a Sultanapore paso and a bale of madrepauk are put into a basket and stamped; it is given to men of the company of lascars who have always

[1] *A Burma Diary of 1810.*

[2] *Bengal Political Consultations*, 21st February, 1812, No. 30.

to bring it into the royal presence. These are the gifts on the entrance of the vessel, for each vessel to the Myowun and Yewun a Sultanapore paso and two bales of madrepauk; to the Akaukwun a dyed paso and two bales of madrepauk; to the Sitkes a plain paso and two bales of madrepauk each; to the Nahkans a plain paso and a bale of printed cloth apiece; to the town-writers a plain paso and a bale of printed cloth apiece. The people on board the vessel have to give them. To the interpreters are given a dyed paso and a bale of cotton cloth apiece. They have to make gifts both on account of entering and on account of leaving. To the men who keep watch at the landing-stage thirty-seven rupees are given; this is divided among those who keep watch on board the vessel." Thus gifts, which were so well established by usage that they became immutable fees, had to be provided for all the officials of the port, besides a special gift for the royal revenue which was made when the boat came up the River bringing news of the vessel's approach. But the charges varied from time to time. In 1813 the flat-rate for all ships amounted to cash and goods valuing Rs. 1630. Then a sliding scale was introduced, and for a vessel of 450 tons the following dues were payable:—

for permission to land cargo	Rs.	4½
one piece Indian cloth	,,	40
do	,,	8
cash	,,	4
two handkerchiefs	,,	2
cash	,,	4
feast for certain officers	,,	62
permission to unload cargo	,,	4½
anchorage and pilotage inwards	,,	394
measurement dues	,,	700
offering to King's warehouse	,,	50
two pieces Indian Cloth	,,	24
two handkerchiefs for an order for ship to depart	,,	2
cash for an order for ship to depart	,,	9
for rendering account of import and export charges	,,	5
three handkerchiefs for an order to reship guns, etc.	,,	3
present to King's linguist	,,	50
eight handkerchiefs for watchmen	,,	8
eight handkerchiefs for watch-house	,,	8
pilotage outwards	,,	150
Total	-	1,500

Except the anchorage and measurement dues, these were all perquisites of the local officials. Occasionally the port revenues were assigned to a member of the royal family; thus at one period the Queen had an assignment on the anchorage dues.[1]

[1] Crawfurd *op. cit.* 180; *British Burma Gazetteer*, II. 582.

The goods which were imported consisted mainly of cotton piecegoods, woollen piece-goods, iron and steel, fire-arms, gun-powder, cordage, sulphur, saltpetre, quicksilver, copper, coarse china, glass, opium, tobacco, coconuts, areca nuts, sugar, and spirits. Of these, cotton goods were the most important, there being very little cotton manufacture in Burma. Not only cotton cloth, mainly in two colours, red and blue or green, which was popularly used "for mantles in the cold season,"[1] but also white and coloured cotton handkerchiefs for use as *gaungbaungs*, were largely imported. These were mainly of Indian manufacture, until in the early nineteenth century Manchester cotton goods began to be imported. The woollen goods were in general blankets of English make. The metal goods were in the form of bolts and bars, tools for shipbuilding, and cheap cutlery. From China and Malaya came the areca nuts, silks, china, and tea. A certain amount of pottery, muskets, mirrors and iron and brass articles came from Mauritius in French vessels. Linen and a certain supply of handkerchiefs came from Madras. But the most valuable part of the imports came from Calcutta in English ships, the sugar and cottons of Bengal being the most profitable of all the articles of import.

Exports comprised lac, catechu, isinglass, vegetable oil, petroleum,[2] beeswax, ivory, raw cotton (for manufacture at Dacca), orpiment and ponies. The lac, catechu, and isinglass, went mainly to China and Malaya, the other articles to India and the West. But more than any of these the export for which Burma was famous was teak, either in the form of ship's masts or in planks. Besides this, the other exports were trifling. Teak was greatly esteemed for ship-building in Calcutta and Madras, and even in Bombay, for it was regarded as preferable for this purpose to the teak of Malabar.[3] Indeed, it was even said that "a durable vessel of burthen cannot be built in the river of Bengal, except by the aid of teak plank which is procurable from Pegu alone."[4] The difficulty about exporting other goods was the attitude of the Burmese Government, which prohibited many exports for fear of draining the country of useful commodities. Thus even rice could not be exported, nor precious metals nor precious stones. "In fact, one would argue, from the state of the laws, that the Government had the definite object in view completely to exclude any commercial intercourse whatever with other countries."[4] The arbitrary interference of the local officials in matters of commerce was a further impediment to trade; and in particular the frequent establishment of monopolies, whether by the local officers or by the King, caused traders much difficulty. For example at one period a company, consisting of seven Burmans, secured a monopoly of the teak trade and of the

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[1] Milburn: *Oriental Commerce*, II. 284.

[2] Oil sold at 7 as. 7 p. per 112 lb. at Yenangyaung and at Rs. 3. 3 as. 6 p. in Rangoon (Cox. *op. cit.* p. 45).

[3] Symes, *op. cit.* p. 457.

[4] Gouger, *op. cit.* p. 60.

trade in certain other minor commodities such as stick-lac, by making an annual payment to the royal treasury of nearly two lakhs of rupees, any unauthorised person found buying or selling these articles of commerce being imprisoned.[1]

At that time, however, it was possible to establish a trading business in Rangoon with very little capital; "any man who could find money enough to purchase a small vessel on the coast of Coromandel, might, by carrying a little tobacco, some blue cloth, and a few iron nails, to the Island of Carnicobar, get in exchange for these articles, which had cost him almost nothing, a ship-load of coconuts; for these he could procure at Pegu a cargo of wood, which he afterwards sold to great advantage either on the Coast or in Bengal".[2] The difficulty which the small trader had to overcome was the port charges; often an adventurer would lack the means to meet these, and would then make bitter and groundless complaints against the laws of Burma.[3] It was the absence of competition from the East India Company that thus enabled men of little means to establish themselves as merchants in Rangoon.

A certain amount of detailed information is available of the trade of Rangoon in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It is said that the annual export of teak was an average of 7,500 full-sized trees; the value of Burma teak passing through the Calcutta custom house alone in the year 1823-24 was Rs. 2,64,176, and the total export at this period valued some five lakhs a year. The export of raw cotton in the same year, 1823-24, to Dacca was 1,200,000 lbs. For some years prior to 1811 the number of square-rigged vessels which cleared the port was from eighteen to twenty-five annually,[4] but this was below normal on account of the depredations of French privateers; after the suppression of their activities the number rose to thirty-five or thirty-six a year. From 1817 to 1822 the average was forty, and the actual number in 1822 was fifty-six. There must also have been numerous small coasting vessels trading to the port. Regarding imports, for some years before the year 1811 the total value of all imports averaged about Rs. 12,00,000 a year, more than half of the total consisting of cotton goods.[5] In the period 1811 to 1816 the annual average value of cotton imports alone increased to nearly Rs. 8,00,000, the increase being due not only to the importation of a larger quantity of goods but also to the fact that the quality of the

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[1] *Bengal Political Consultations*, 21st February, 1812, No. 80.

[2] Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

[3] Symes, *op. cit.*, p. 460.

[4] A detailed statement of arrivals and departures of shipping is available for the period 1st January to 14th July, 1803; and in this period of six and a half months arrivals comprised nine "ships", seven brigs, two grabs, and two sloops, of which five came from Bengal, five from Penang, seven from Madras, one from Muscat, one from Bombay, and one from Tavoy. In the same period departures comprised fourteen "ships", four brigs, and one long-boat, of which five went to Bengal, four to Penang, and ten to Madras. (See Appendix B: Shipping at Rangoon in 1803 and 1838.)

[5] Milburn, *Oriental Commerce* (1813), II. 284 sqq. gives the following table showing the actual distribution of imported and exported articles in the trade with British India in the year 1805. The information must be accepted with reserve; the figure of Rs. 57,874 for Treasure exported is surprisingly high in view of the prohibition of the export of the precious metals from Burma.

PLATE No. 4



Marryat, Thornton and Moore: Illustrations of the Burmese War.

THE PRINCIPAL APPROACH TO THE GREAT DAGON PAGODA, 1824.

cotton goods had improved, each piece valuing about Rs. 8 as compared with Rs. 5 in the earlier period. In the years 1817 to 1822 the cotton goods were now mainly of English manufacture and were worth Rs. 10 per piece; the total value of cotton imports in these years averaged over Rs. 15,00,000 per annum, and was still rapidly increasing, for in 1822 the value was not far short of Rs. 23,00,000. This rapid increase was probably due to the development of trade following the restricted period of the French Wars. Including other articles of commerce, the total imports valued Rs. 25,00,000. Exports in 1822 were reckoned at about the same value, so bringing the total volume of trade to nearly Rs. 50,00,000 annually.[1]

Although the trade of Rangoon was thus by no means inconsiderable, it had nevertheless not yet been developed to its full capacity, and one observer goes so far as to say that by comparison with the possibilities "in those days Burmah may be said to have had almost no external commerce at all."[2] It would appear that the obstacles placed in the way of exports by the Burmese Government and the general insecurity of conditions, deterred merchants from opening establishments in the country. Yet there were great opportunities; it was possible to buy goods for £3,000 in Calcutta and sell them for £8,000 in Burma. But then arose the problem of disposing of the gold and silver so obtained, and from this developed the ship-building industry of Rangoon.

It was impossible to export, save in defiance of the law, any gold or silver, and the value received in return for imported goods must be exported in the form of some other commodity. But the amount of exported goods was, apart from teak, not every great, and only a certain quantity of teak could be disposed of in foreign countries without flooding the market and so reducing

Imports.	Rs.
Tin	1,400
Wine	1,400
Woollens	5,176
Piece Goods	1,26,202
Opium	15,110
Grain	2,000
Rum	2,336
Canvas	1,534
Sundries	8,332
(Re-exported goods)	
Broad Cloth	17,196
Iron and Nails	6,528
Wines and Liquors	2,637
Velvets	8,314
Tin and plated Ware	4,625
China Ware	3,085
Ironmongery	2,148
Sundries	9,395
Treasure	19,579
	2,45,232

Exports.	Rs.
Timber	4,61,153
Pepper	18,809
Hartal (Orpiment)	13,788
Coir and Coir Cables	12,678
Ponies	30,867
Cardamons	1,232
Stick-lac	657
Wax	3,249
Sundries	28,305
Treasure	57,874
	6,53,602

The average value of imports from British India in the six years 1802—06 inclusive was Rs. 2,58,160 and of exports Rs. 4,78,168.

[1] Crawfurd, *op. cit.*, pp. 195, sqq.

[2] Gouger *op. cit.*, p. 60.

the price. Therefore merchants often utilised the treasure which they received to pay for the construction of ships and for the repairing and refitting of ships. Ships had been built in the past at Syriam; now they were built at Rangoon and Maingthu (Dalla). The abundance of teak made construction cheap; and the twenty-foot tide, and the soft muddy banks, made it unnecessary to have docks, for ships could be beached without danger. The industry, so far as Rangoon is concerned, seems to have been established first by the French in their factory at Maingthu, but the Burmans, learning the art from the French, progressed rapidly; the Burmese carpenters were good craftsmen and were hard-working, and were regarded as better shipwrights than the Indians, and as good as any in the East. The industry was encouraged by the lowness of costs, for construction, which cost some Rs. 70 or Rs. 80 a ton, involved only two-thirds of the cost in Bengal, only a half of that in Bombay, and only one-third of that in Penang: while the Government, to provide a further inducement, remitted customs duty on cordage, canvas, and iron if intended for a new vessel; and vessels leaving the port on a first voyage paid no harbour dues. There was, however, a tax of ten per cent of the cost on the construction of square-rigged vessels. The weakness of the ship-building industry was lack of iron, which was usually imported ready-forged from the Presidencies; and the builders, being generally speculative adventurers, economised unduly on iron, as also on labour; thus Rangoon ships were sometimes not too safe. Coppering had as a rule to be done in Calcutta. When proper materials were available, the Rangoon yards could, however, turn out teak ships which, it was said, if oiled yearly with earth-oil, would outlast four oak-ships; and it was stated that vessels built in Burma a hundred years before could still be seen in the ports. Many a sound vessel was built which, manned by Burmese crews, sailed to all ports of India; and some even sailed to the United Kingdom; while the French-built *Lauriston* served in the French Company's navy. So important did the industry become, that at one time there were 3,000 men employed in the shipyards, the average pay being eight annas a day for carpenters. At one period many of the workmen were Siamese prisoners of war, who had to be found some occupation. Some of the shipwrights were Europeans, and Europeans were sometimes employed as ship's officers in Burmese vessels.[1]

[1] The following is the monthly salary bill of a King's ship, the *Thunendah*, in the year 1785 —
Captain Rs. 320.
First Officer Rs. 80.
Second Officer Rs. 60.
Gunner Rs. 25.
Five Sucanys (*i.e.* steermen) Rs. 12 each.
Syrang (*i.e.* boatswain) Rs. 15.
First Tondall, (*i.e.* assistant boatswain) Rs. 24.
Second Tondall Rs. 20.
Caulker Rs. 13.
Two Casabs (*i.e.* storekeepers) Rs. 8 each.
Forty-five Lascars Rs. 7 each.
Supercargo Rs. 300.
Imperial Record Department, Public Consultations, 13th March, 1789, No. D95).

Between 1786 and 1824, one hundred and eleven square-rigged vessels of European model were constructed, of a total tonnage of 35,000 tons, some of them being as much as 1,000 tons burden. The following table shows the number of vessels constructed in Rangoon from 1786 to 1821:

1786	- -	2
1790	- -	1 of 400 tons.
1795	- -	1 of 77 tons.
1800	- -	1 of 400 tons.
1801	- -	7 of 3,096 tons aggregate.
1802	- -	11 of 3,412 tons aggregate.
1803	- -	8 of 2,177 ,,
1804	- -	8 of 1,993 ,,
1805	- -	7 of 2,705 ,,
1806	- -	8 of 1,032 ,,
1807	- -	9 of 1,613 ,,
1808	- -	7 of 1,395 ,,
1809	- -	1 of 41 ,,
1810	- -	4 of 1,192 ,,
1811	- -	1 of 620 ,,
1812	- -	1 of 248 ,,
1813	- -	4 of 1,034 ,,
1814	- -	8 of 1,835 ,,
1815	- -	4 of 1,213 ,,
1816	- -	3 of 1,159 ,,
1817	- -	4 of 2,039 ,,
1818	- -	3 of 1,545 ,,
1819	- -	3 of 984 ,,
1820	- -	1 of 800 ,,
1821	- -	1 of 177 ,,

This list may be incomplete, for Symes professes to have seen several ships of six hundred to a thousand tons on the stocks in 1795, under construction on French models; but Symes inclined to exaggerate what he saw. The largest ship included in the above list was the *Marquess Wellesley*, of 1,050 tons, built in 1802; though in the earlier period the French factory's 50-gun *Lauriston* was of 1,500 tons.

Most of these ships were sold in foreign ports, and some became units of the East India Company's fleet. One, a twenty-five gun brig, which was on the stocks in 1824, was being built for so far-distant a customer as the Iman of Muscat.

Apart from construction, the shipyards did a busy trade in refitting ships; though the River contained a species of worm, the *teredo navialis*, which was dangerous to ships and indisposed ships' masters from staying in the port longer than was essential.

These shipyards lay principally along the tidal creek which ran in from the main stream near the present Latter street.

So important did the Rangoon shipbuilding industry become that there was some alarm expressed in British India and it was even suggested unofficially that steps of some sort should be taken to discourage it as a dangerous rival to the Company's maritime power.[1]

As regards inland trade, apart from forwarding imported goods and receiving goods for export, Rangoon did a large trade in ngapi and rice exported to Upper Burma. The Pagoda still continued to be a centre of pilgrimage and of trade, especially, it was noted, for the Shans, who brought to Rangoon the "Pegue ponies" for export to India; and every year the great festival was held at the full-moon of Tabaung, with its cosmopolitan market to which men and women came even from China, as had been the case for centuries past.[2] "This is the season for the great feast of Gaudama", wrote a resident of Rangoon in March 1817. "It commenced yesterday, and is to continue for three days. It is observed all over the country; but I presume the multitude collected in this place is much greater than at any other, excepting Ava. Priests and people come in boats, from a great distance, to worship at the pagoda in this place, which is supposed to contain a relic of Gaudama. The viceroy, on these days, goes out in all the pomp and splendour possible, dressed and ornamented with all his insignia of office, attended by the members of government and the common people"[3]. The festival was said by another observer to constitute the second largest fair in the country, the only larger one being that at Paleik, near Amarapura.[4]

There is no certain evidence of the size of the population of Rangoon at any time in this period. Symes in 1795 estimated it at 30,000 people and stated that there were 5,000 registered houses;[5] but Symes always erred on the side of optimism, and Buchanan, who accompanied him to Burma, gives the population at about 10,000 only.[6] On the other hand, in 1809 the population was locally estimated at as much as 60,000.[7] Yet it is stated that the Burmese Census of 1811, records of which have not survived, returned only 18,000 for both Rangoon itself and the neighbouring villages,[8] and it is further said that at that time "the number of registered families . . . . . does not exceed 1,500",[9] a figure which, on Symes' average of 6 persons per house, would give only 9,000 population for the town. There had, however, been an extensive fire in January 1810 and this may have caused a diminution of the population to some extent. At the time of the War of 1824, 40,000 or 50,000 inhab-

[1] Symes, *op. cit.*, p. 459.
[2] Crawfurd, *op. cit.*, p. 55.
[3] Judson: *Narrative of the American Baptist Mission* p. 99.
[4] Crawfurd *op. cit.*, p. 55.
[5] Symes *op. cit.*, p. 214.
[6] Buchanan: *Burma Journal* (Home Miscellaneous Series 687/1).
[7] *A Burma Diary of 1810.*
[8] Crawfurd *op. cit.*, p. 52.
[9] *Bengal Political Consultations* 26th December, 1811, No. 6.

itants were reckoned, of whom 1,500 were said to be pongyis,[1] yet in 1822 an observer estimated the population at only 10,000[2], and in 1823 another observer noted that "the population of this town perhaps amounts to 10,000 inhabitants, and the inland navigation to about 10,000 more": meaning, presumably that the creek villages of the district contained about 10,000 inhabitants[3]. It is probably safer to take the lower estimate and reckon the population at an average of about 10,000.

Of the ten thousand inhabitants, a certain proportion were slaves, though there is no record of the actual number. The slaves fell into three categories. There were prisoners of war, who had been sold to the highest bidder; these were mainly Siamese. There were pagoda slaves, whose number, in view of the many pagodas in Rangoon, must have been considerable. And there were those enslaved for debt. Under Burmese law, a debtor who could not fulfill his obligations was liable to be seized by the creditor, who might employ him in performing "menial service" until he could liquidate the debt. It would appear that the wife and children of a debtor were equally liable to be enslaved in this manner.[4] But in such cases the enslaved person was rather a pledge for the redemption of the debt than a slave proper, for at any time when the debtor could produce the amount owed, the slave must be set free. Nor was there any necessary degradation involved in this form of slavery; such slaves were regarded as servants and were well treated. It was only the pagoda slaves and those engaged in burning and burying the dead or employed as public executioners that were out-castes. Indeed, it would appear that enslavement for debt was sometimes incurred voluntarily. A missionary states that servants commonly entered into employment on such terms. "It is not perfectly clear to us", he wrote[5], "whether what is termed here buying slaves ought to be considered anything more than a different mode of hiring servants". It was customary, he continued, for a would-be servant to go to a prospective employer and "offer to become his slave, (or servant, perhaps, it would be proper to say) on condition that he will advance a certain amount of money". The sum being agreed upon, the servant would receive the money and commence work, without wages. He could not then leave his service unless he redeemed himself by repaying the sum advanced; but on the other hand he did not in so doing renounce his civil rights, for he might not be abused or beaten, and could obtain redress in the courts against his master if he were thus maltreated. Further, if he cared, he might at any time go to another employer and similarly receive an advance from him with which he might repay his late master and so transfer his service. "If this be a lawful way of obtaining the services of a person", observed the missionary,

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[1] Trant *op. cit.*, p. 26: Doveton *op. cit.*, p. 21.
[2] Gouger *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.
[3] *Home Miscellaneous Series* 662/67 — Statement by M. F. Crisp.
[4] Symes *op. cit.*, pp. 216-7.
[5] *Felix Carey and the American Baptist Mission in Burma.*

"It is probable that we may get servants as cheap here, after a while as you do in Bengal. Such a woman as costs us at present eight rupees per month, may be obtained for the *use* of one hundred". Sometimes this system of service was combined with the normal system of wage-payment; thus the same missionary later gave Rs. 125 to emancipate an old washerman, who agreed to work for Rs. 5 a month, of which Rs. 2 was to be retained towards the payment of the debt; and he emancipated another servant for Rs. 75, and paid to him Rs. 5 a month without any repayment of the principal.

The free population was of a heterogeneous nature, as is commonly the case with sea-ports. Symes, in 1795, remarked that "Rangoon, having long been the asylum of insolvent debtors from the different settlements of India, is crowded with foreigners of desperate fortunes, who find from the Burmans a friendly reception, and, for the most part, support themselves by carrying on a petty trade, which affords a decent subsistence to those who act prudently. Here are to be met fugitives from all countries of the East, and of all complexions; the exchange, if I may so call the common place of their meeting, exhibits a motley assemblage of merchants, such as few towns of much greater magnitude can produce; Malabars, Moguls, Persians, Parsees, Armenians, Portugueze, French, and English, all mingle here and are engaged in various branches of commerce". His reference to the "desperate fortunes" of the foreigners is borne out by the personal history of such of them as is known. That the foreign residents should have been of bad character is not surprising, for there was at this time no official supervision by any foreign power over its own nationals. The English East India Company had withdrawn completely from Burma after the massacre at Negrais in 1759. In 1755 Alaungpaya had been willing to grant permission for factories to be established at Dagon and Bassein in return for an immediate gift of one thousand muskets and twenty pieces of artillery, but this gift was not forthcoming[1], and though opportunity was given once more in 1760 for the establishment of a factory at Bassein, the Company failed to take advantage of it. Again in 1767 there occurred an opportunity of founding a factory at Rangoon. The circumstances accompanying the offer which the Burmese Government made on this occasion are peculiar. It appears that a ship, the *Tantabin,* belonging to the King, was detained at the instance of a shipbuilder of Bengal for non-payment of certain sums due for repairs; but that Lord Clive, desiring to maintain good relations with the King, ordered her to be sent to Rangoon together with presents; and this was done. The King, being much pleased by Clive's courtesy, ordered her to be sent back to Calcutta as a gift to Clive or whoever else might be at the time in charge there, together with a present of timber and an elephant, though the latter, "not being possible to be taken on board any ship", was not actually sent. He at the same time made a grant to the Company of ground near the River at Rangoon, two hundred fathoms long and one hundred fathoms broad, for the erection of a factory, and expressed a desire for a return gift of

[1] Dalrymple, I. 154.

"powder, Ball, Large Guns, and firelocks". Notices of the King's gift were posted up in public places in Rangoon, and the Akaukwun was ordered to despatch a letter with the ship; but knowing no English, he employed one Richard Tyson, an English merchant of Rangoon, to write it. Tyson entered into a conspiracy with another Rangoon merchant, Richard Dundas, and the ship's captain, Moses Smith, "to pervert the King's Intentions by concealing the above Circumstances, and by pretending that She (the ship) belonged to Gregory Awas the King's Shawbunder at Rangoon for whom Smith pretended to act in the Quality of Captain & Supercargo". In pursuance of this design, Tyson wrote "such a Letter as would best answer their Purposes" instead of the letter which the Akaukwun desired. But a firm of Calcutta, Messrs. Waple and Banks, had previously endeavoured to purchase this same ship from the King, and had sent a considerable present to him with this object; and when the ship came once more to Calcutta they seized her as their property. The matter was taken to the courts, which gave judgment in favour of Waple and Banks. But something of the true circumstances of the case became known in the course of the proceedings, and Harry Verelst, Clive's successor, carried out a further investigation. A number of ship's masters and merchants who had been in Rangoon at the time when the letter was being written gave evidence consistently showing that Tyson had misrepresented the Akaukwun's intentions, and Messrs. Waple and Banks then agreed to waive all claim to the vessel provided that they were compensated for their expenditure in presents; while Verelst also waived all personal claim and made the ship over to the Company. But Verelst was desirous of accepting the King's offer of a site for a factory: "It will", he wrote, "be proper for us to take Possession of the Ground granted to us by His Majesty—a Gift which promises to be productive of advantage both to the Company and to Individuals". He proposed further to request the King to send Tyson and Dundas to Calcutta for trial[1]. There is no evidence that this latter request was actually made, nor did the Company accept the offer of a factory site. No further reference to the matter is discoverable in the records; and since no contemporary writer makes mention of the existence of such a factory, it is evident that the offer was declined, the Company doubtless feeling that after the Negrais episode settlements in Burma were likely to be more trouble than they were worth. Official relations with the Burmese Government, indeed, almost ceased for thirty-five years after the Negrais massacre, and the trade with Burma was left entirely in the hands of private adventurers[2]. The French, on the other hand, saw in Burma an opportunity of compensating themselves for their losses in India. In 1766 they regained possession of their Indian factories which

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[1] Imperial Record Department, *Public Proceedings*, 1st February, 1768, No. 2 (a) sqq.

[2] The statement in the *British Burma Gazetteer*, II. 568, and repeated as lately as the 1st April, 1937, in the Burma number of the *Times*, that there was an English factory at Rangoon in this period perhaps arises from a misreading of *Hunter op. cit.* 61, who refers to the presence of a factory belonging to the "Imperial Company." But the Imperial Company was the French East India Company, as, indeed, the context of Hunter's statement shows clearly enough. It may be noted that Symes in his survey of recent Burmese history prefixed to his *Embassy to Ava*, 1800, makes no reference to an English factory in Rangoon.

had been lost during the Seven Years' War and which were returned to them under the terms of the Treaty of Paris of 1763; and the Council of Pondichery began to consider reopening an establishment in Burma. An officer named Lefévre was sent as emissary to the King, to deliver presents and to seek the release of the prisoners who survived from the taking of Syriam in 1756; and further to ask permission to found a factory at Rangoon. The King, Hsinybushin, consented to the release of the prisoners,[1] and also granted land eight "bamboos" by fifty (one bamboo equalling twelve feet), with permission to erect buildings thereon and to hoist the French flag, together with exemption from the fees generally levied on the building of ships. The permission to hoist the flag was granted to no other nation, so the French assert; but there is no evidence that any other nation asked for it.[2] But the factory was not allowed to be built in Rangoon itself; there was evidently some suspicion of the good faith of the French, their support of the Mons in 1755 being long remembered against them so that it was still talked of even fifty years later,[3] and they had to build their factory at Maingthu, modern Dalla. The factory did not prosper. The French Company in India never recovered its old power, and its decline in India was accompanied by weakness in Burma, though the factory was useful and built a number of ships in its shipyard, including the *Lauriston* which took part in the war which broke out with the English in 1778. But that war paralysed the factory; the English once more took the French ports in India; the Maingthu factory had to be abandoned for lack of support; and when peace was made and the Indian factories were restored, no attempt was made to re-establish it. The abandonment of the connection with Burma was not effected without due consideration, however. In 1783 Bussy had some thought of concluding a new commercial treaty with Burma, and consideration was even given to a project of deserting India and seeking in Burma an alternative sphere for French enterprise. But Bussy came to the conclusion that the project would not succeed; "Pegu", he observed "is a country of the most decided anarchy, where revolutions are very frequent between two sects which consist of the Peguans and the Burmans. Rangoon is thirty-six leagues from the King's residence, and is the place where the ship-building yards are established, and is the only one that would suit us. The acquisition of it is not practicable and we could become master of it and hold it only by constantly maintaining a superior force there"; and he noted that the English, who had been so successful in India, had not been able to establish themselves on the coast of Burma.[4] The famous admiral Suffren seems to have taken the matter more seriously, for he observed to the Roman Catholic Bishop of Pegu

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[1] This provision was not complied with; see *Harvey* 231 for the case of Milard.

[2] Cordier dates this agreement as April 1769 in *Historique Abrégé,* and as March 1768 in *Mélanges;* Sonnerat dates it 1769.

[3] *Bengal Secret and Political Consultations* 17th May, 1805, No. 160A.

[4] Gaudart: *Catalogue des Manuscrits des Anciennes Archives de l'Inde Française,* I. 159. De Bussy's information appears to have been out of date since he refers to Rangoon as only thirty-six leagues from "the King's residence," evidently imagining Pegu to be still the capital of a kingdom.

who visited Europe in 1783, that "he soon expected to see him in that part of the world, for that Pegue was the country through which the English might be attacked in India with most advantage. Souffrein (*sic*) did not hesitate to avow the hostile designs of the French against Pegue, which would certainly have been executed had not the derangement of affairs that immediately preceded the revolution and the death of Suffrein himself, the chief promoter of the scheme, prevented it".[1] Thus nothing came of the project, and except for the ten years or so following 1768 there was no European settlement at Rangoon. The French did indeed at times keep unofficial agents in the port, and there are references to the presence of an agent of the American Government in the town,[2] but these had no authority over their nationals, and in practice the Pegu trade was left to private enterprise, and Rangoon became a city of refuge for those who had made the Indian presidencies too hot to hold them. The number of foreigners, mainly of this character, was fairly large. In 1804 the foreign population was reckoned by an English observer at some five thousand Muslims, about five hundred Christians, about the same number of Malabars, and forty Armenians.[3] The term "Christians" presumably covers both Europeans and Asiatic Christians, for there were a number of non-European Christians, mainly Goanese, in the town.[4] The number of Europeans was therefore small; it was reckoned that a Christian household averaged five persons, so that for the five hundred Christians there must have been one hundred householders, but these hundred householders must have included many who were not exclusively European in race. In 1802 the number of British subjects in Rangoon, including not only permanent residents but also seamen frequenting the port, was only about 60; while in 1810 it was reported that "the number of British subjects at Rangoon is very small. Messrs. Fleming, Turner, Ramsden, and Snoball, are the only ones that can be termed residents of the place. The first is a respectable m'rchant, formerly commander of a ship, who has been some time settled in Pegue. The second is a ship builder. The two others by having married Burmah women who are not permitted to quit the country may be looked upon as in same measure naturalized at Rangoon. Besides these there may in general be an average of eight or ten more British subjects attached to the few vessels that frequent the Port, or other adventurers not of the most creditable description",[5] and this statement is borne out by other evidence that there were in that year eleven Englishmen in the town.[6] There were also a few Frenchmen; in 1804 an

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[1] *Bengal Secret and Political Consultations* 17th May, 1804, No. 160A.

[2] *Bengal Political Consultations* 26th December, 1811, No. 6; 26th March, 1812, No. 1.

[3] *Bengal Secret and Political Consultations* 20th June, 1805, No. 440. The term "Malabar" was often used to imply South Indians generally.

[4] *Bigandet* gives the total number of Christians at the end of the eighteenth century as 3,000, but if the population in all numbered only about 10,000, this would make 30 per cent of it Christian, a very improbable figure which is, moreover, quite inconsistent with the statement in *Bengal Secret and Political Consultations*.

[5] *Bengal Secret and Political Consultations* 29th May, 1810, No. 1. "Snoball" is an error for "Snowball."

[6] *A Burma Diary of 1810.*

English observer remarked the presence of only three permanent French residents, besides four Frenchmen who were temporarily in the port engaged in building a ship. One or two Dutch merchants are also referred to in various accounts of the period. Admittedly the dislocation of trade attendant on the French Wars, together with the disturbed state of the country at that period, had tended to reduce the foreign population; but even so, since in 1824 there were only seven Englishmen (one being country-born), two Americans, and one Greek, in the town,[1] it is evident that at no time did the European population approach the figure of five hundred. Apart from the floating population of sailors, twenty or thirty householders and their families, totalling a hundred or so persons, is more like the probable figure. The remaining four hundred Christians must thus have constituted the Goanese, or, as it was commonly called, the Portuguese, community. The families of the European inhabitants would in general be Burmese or Anglo-Burmese.

The figure of five thousand for Muslim community is surprisingly high and is perhaps an error for five hundred. If so, it may be concluded that of the total population about a fifth were of a foreign race; and this is not a remarkably high proportion in a seaport. Of the indigenous population, Mons and Burmans were present in about equal proportions.[2]

The Armenian community was probably the most important of the groups of foreign residents. The import and export trade was very largely in their hands, and the community seems to have been a prosperous one. The Armenians had their own church which was built about 1766, on a site south of the Custom House, by Gregory Avas, who served the Burmese Government as Akaukwun of Rangoon, and who is said to have been rewarded for his services with the myosaship of Syriam.[3]

It is significant that not only Symes but also other official observers, such as Canning who made four visits to Burma, comment on the undesirable character of the Europeans who lived in Rangoon. The Burmese authorities, realising the advantages to be derived from a flourishing commerce, were not averse to allowing foreign merchants to settle in the port, and even encouraged them to marry into the country; but at the same time the attitude of the local officials towards foreigners remained one of suspicion. Thus special precautions were taken whenever a larger number of foreign vessels than usual happened to be in the harbour; and, some rumour of the French design of seizing Lower Burma having reached the ears of the authorities, at one time in 1783 the Myowun was paying daily visits to the Wharf to see for himself what shipping had arrived, and the appearance of a single unexpected ship was enough to throw the town into a causeless panic.[4] The effect of this suspicion was that while the less reputable foreigners were encouraged to settle in the place, merchants

[1] Wilson: *Documents Illustrative of the Burmese War*, p. 50.
[2] *Home Miscellaneous Series* 674/1041 sqq.
[3] See Dalrymple, *Oriental Repertory*, for Gregory.
[4] Cordier: *Les Français en Birmanie.*

of good standing were nevertheless not by any means welcome. "For the sake of his revenue he (the King) is willing to admit the common class of traders that frequent Rangoon whom the hope of gain and other allurements will ever attract and render submissive to any indignity," wrote Captain Canning. "These he regards as too insignificant to create alarm." But while "fugitive Englishmen" and others who by reason of their past misdeeds were not likely to claim protection from the foreign governments were welcome, respectable men whose interests their governments might regard seriously were looked on with suspicion. Nor, indeed, were conditions of life in Rangoon such as to attract the better type of foreigner. For example, a merchant could by no means be certain of receiving his letters without their contents being made known to his competitors: for orders were at one period issued that all foreign correspondence was to be censored, and the censors were not at all trustworthy. "It is difficult", it was said, "to imagine a more disagreeable or even degraded state than the present situation of Europeans at Rangoon where their public or private letters, invoices and most secret accounts, are subject to the inspection of three or more interpreters, some of whom are naturalized in the country and of the lowest class, all traders and of course interested and under no promise (or even injunction) of secrecy."[1] Again, while marriages into the country were approved, the law forbade the departure of females from the country, so that a foreign resident could not normally leave the country unless he were prepared to cast his female children adrift. "As long as Europeans frequent the Port of Rangoon such children will certainly be born," it was said, and, the parents being in general of bad character and possessed of little scruple about deserting their offspring, there resulted "the extreme hardship of the female children of Europeans in the country being doomed to a life of certain immorality and degradation."[2]

On the other hand, it was not impossible to evade the law in this regard; at least two cases are on record where this was done. In one case an English missionary was allowed to depart with his family, accompanied by a Burmese woman servant, in respect of whom the Myowun waived "the usual fees", and it would thus appear that by paying "fees", which were more likely bribes, the enforcement of the law could be avoided. In the other case, a missionary apparently entered into a bond for the eventual return of certain women.[3] But such relaxations were obviously dependent on the favour of the authorities, and many cases must have occurred in which this was not forthcoming.

Again, the administration of justice was galling to Europeans. In one instance a lascar jumped into the River to avoid punishment which the mate of his ship was about to inflict. It was believed that he was drowned, and

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[1] *Bengal Secret and Political Consultations* 5th July, 1804, No. 125.

[2] *Bengal Secret and Political Consultations* 12th June, 1812, No. 22.

[3] *Felix Carey and the English Baptist Mission in Burma.*

the mate, being held responsible for his death, was arrested and kept in the stocks all night. Next morning the lascar, who had in fact climbed back into the ship and hidden himself, reappeared; the mate thus escaped the penalty of a heavy fine. The administration of civil justice had equally strange features. An Indian of Madras fled to Burma to avoid his creditors; his property was sold up and the vessel which he owned was bought by an Englishman; the ship came into Rangoon for repairs, and the former owner secured from a magistrate an order admitting his ownership; the new owner explained the situation to the Yondaw, which reversed the magistrate's order; but again the magistrate issued precisely the same order and again the Yondaw reversed it; this went on for six or seven times before the owner, who had suffered heavy loss by the detention of his ship, finally secured recognition of his rights. It was complained also that "the encouragement given to servants and others to institute suits against wealthy foreigners in general, but commanders of vessels in particular, is invariably attended with humiliating and degrading circumstances. Let any complaint be made against a Commander of a ves el to any of the officers of justice (of which class there are about 20 in Rangoon), he instantly despatches a number of peons accompanied by a King's interpreter to bring the person forthwith into his presence, in accomplishing of which the person is paraded thro' the streets leading to the Judge's house like a criminal. And when once an irresolute person is in what at Rangoon is termed Justice, his innocence of the charge against him will not protect him from the Judge's charges nor save him from giving presents."[1]

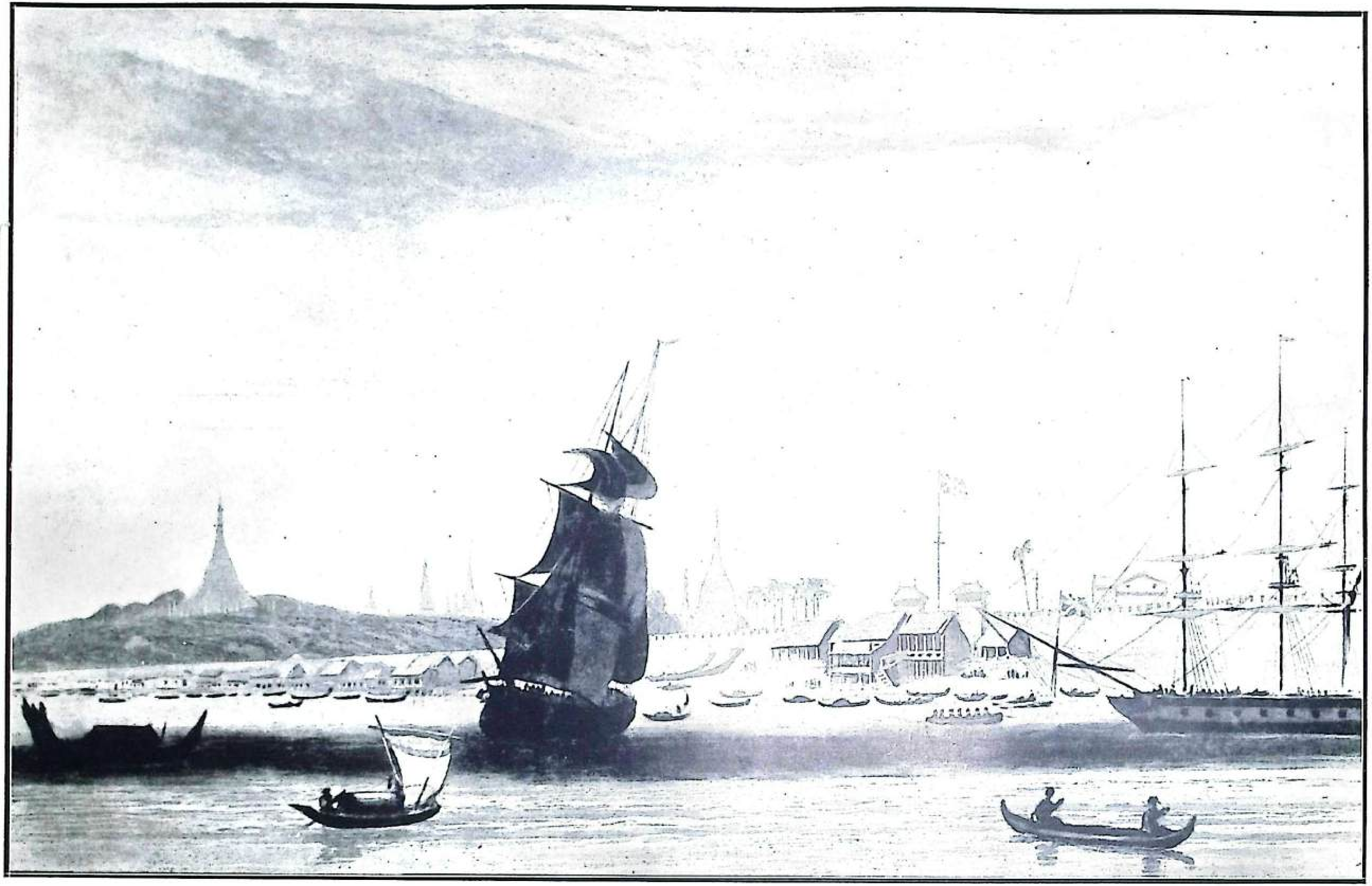
It was also not uncommon for foreign vessels to be impressed for government purposes, such as the transport of troops and supplies to Arakan or Tenasserim, quite inadequate compensation being paid for such service. On one such occasion a ship was forcibly seized and required to go to Tavoy; on its return to Rangoon the Myowun ordered it to proceed to Calcutta with a cargo which was his private trading venture, and although the ship was bound for Penang, the captain had no option but to obey the Myowun's command; the Myowun would not pay more than Rs. 1200 a month for the use of the ship, but he deposited two month' payments with the Rangoon agent of the captain; the ship sailed on its enforced voyage, and was wrecked. On receipt of the news of this disaster, the Myowun compelled the agent to refund the charter-money. On another occasion, when the Burmese were besieging Tavoy, held by the Siamese, foreign ships were required to discharge their cargoes and go to Arakan to bring grain thence to the seat of war; and it was complained that no payment was made for such service, although the King was actually charged for freight by the local authorities.[2]

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[1] *Home Miscellaneous Series* 661/111.

[2] Gouger *op. cit.* pp. 76 sqq.; Hunter *op. cit.* p. 24: *Bengal Political Consultations* 29th May, 1810, No. 10, 14th June, 1811, No. 51, 15th November, 1811, No. 34, 21st February, 1812, No. 20; Imperial Record Department. *Bengal Public Proceedings*, 17th December, 1792, No. 12.

PLATE No. 5



Kershaw: Views in the Burman Empire.

RANGOON FROM THE ANCHORAGE, 1824.

While an appeal to the King against the arbitrary actions of the local government might be attended with success, such a proceeding was dangerous. Thus a certain Captain Archer, while building a ship at Rangoon, "being at different times wantonly ill-treated and retarded in his operations, and finding his consequent applications to the officers of Government for redress only ended in additional insult; came to a determination of proceeding to Ava in order to submit his Grievances to his Majesty. He accordingly escaped in a small Boat, and pursued his way thence at the risk of his existence. The Governor on discovering his departure, ordered armed Boats to pursue and retake him, encouraging them with a very large reward for his head". But Archer reached the capital safely and received immediate redress.[1]

Apart from legal difficulties, conditions of life in Rangoon were unattractive and expensive. It was in general impossible to obtain good food locally: even bread and butter could be obtained only with difficulty, and though meat other than beef was obtainable by foreigners as a rule, there were sometimes difficulties about that also. Normally rice, fish and poultry constituted the sole diet. Bread cost a rupee for five small loaves, and even so the bread was bad. The impossibility of obtaining supplies locally is illustrated by the following demand which two missionaries sent to Bengal within a week of landing at Rangoon: they asked for "a maund of ghee, a maund of candles, four of common Bengal soap, the cheapest sort, for our private use, a jar of biscuit, two of baked bread, and two of butter; about twenty gallons of rum; a pint and a quart sauce-pan would be very useful articles. We shall want a little tea. We are in need of another smoother for the washerman, larger than those used at the mission house. . . . . send, and place to the account of brother Chater, one table shade, and a dozen pairs of shoes. Let them be the size of brother Moore's foot. Ten pairs of the half rupee shoes, and two one rupee shoes with thick soles."[2] If it was necessary to import from Bengal even such commodities as those thus enumerated, it is evident that living in Rangoon was costly and difficult. The following statement of accounts which shows the monthly expenditure of an East India Company's ship's captain who was living in Rangoon for a time in 1768 is also illuminating.[3]

Madeira Wine 62 bottles @ 24 P. Dz.	Rs.	124-0-0	
Dutch Claret 12 " 15 P. Dz.		15-0-0	
Beer 62 " 12 "		62-0-0	
Geneva 4 Case Bottles @ 3¾ each		15-0-0	
Arrack 15 gallons @ 2 each		30-0-0	246-0-0
Candles 120 weighing 15 seers @ 81¼ P. Md.			30-4-7
Bazar Charges		203-7-5	
Necessaries brought from Calcutta		126-7-5	330-5-0

[1] *Bengal Public Proceedings*, 17th December, 1792, No. 13.
[2] *Felix Carey and the English Baptist Mission in Burma.*
[3] *Bengal Public Proceedings*, 20th November, 1769, No. 4.

House rent.		100-0-0
Servant Wages—		
1 Consumah[1]	15-0-0	
1 Mate.	10-0-0	
1 Kismager.	6-0-0	
1 Baker	12-0-0	
1 Dubash.	20-0-0	
1 Water Woman.	5-0-0	
1 Pyman.	50-0-0	118-0-0
		824-9-7

No doubt this vast sum of over eight hundred rupees was spent largely on account of entertainment, as the amount of wines and spirits consumed would appear to indicate; but even so the heavy expenditure on food is significant, as is the fact that of the household expenditure other than on liquor, rent and servants, over a third was incurred in obtaining "necessaries brought from Calcutta." It was estimated in 1809 that the lowest possible cost of living for foreigners was one hundred rupees a month for a single man, and one hundred and forty for a married couple, plus ten rupees more for each child; but these estimates were given by missionaries, who lived in the simplest possible style, and who were paying no house-rent; in effect their estimated expenditure represents cost of food and of one or two servants.[2]

Houses were, like food, expensive. A good house, of brick, cost Rs. 100 a month, and even a timber house taken on a year's lease cost Rs. 35 a month. The cost of building was also high compared with India. Bricks of small size cost Rs. 50 per ten thousand, and large-sized bricks were Rs. 100 for ten thousand. A pukka house could not be built under Rs. 6,000, nor a timber one under Rs. 3,000.

The foreign trading community was supplemented by the presence of foreign priests and missionaries. From the earliest days of Rangoon there had been Portuguese priests subject to the Bishop of Meliapur, whose function was to minister to the Portuguese or Goanese Christians. They built a small church, the church of the Rosary, in the suburb of Tatgale, with a dwelling-house attached. In 1760 Frs. Donati and Gallizia, and in 1761 Bishop Percoto, arrived in Rangoon; and six years later Father Carpani. They were Italians and not subject to the Portuguese Bishop of Meliapur, and there seems to have been deadly rivalry between them and the Portuguese priests. One of the latter tried to poison Carpani, and, that failing, to stab him; wherefore the authorities arrested him and put him aboard a ship to be taken to India,

[1] *Consumah* — butler; *Mate* — butler's assistant; *Kismager* — table-servant; *Dubash* — interpreter; *Pyman* — footman, or watchman.

[2] *Felix Carey and the English Baptist Mission in Burma.*

but he went for a swim when the ship anchored down the River and was eaten by an alligator. In 1782 Father Sangermano arrived, and stayed in Rangoon till 1808. The Italians built two churches, the Church of the Immaculate Conception within the stockade, with a school attached, and the Church of St. John some distance to the north of the town. Percoto seems to have had some influence with the local authorities, and was sometimes called to the Yondaw to advise in litigation between foreigners.[1]

In the early nineteenth century the first Baptist missionaries settled in Rangoon. The Company's Government disapproved of missionary activity, in India, and the English Baptists of Serampore, seeking a new field of activity despatched two of their members to Rangoon in 1807 to enquire into the prospects for mission work there. They returned with a favourable report. Hence towards the end of the year James Chater and Felix Carey, son of William Carey the founder of the Serampore College, were sent to found a mission in Burn a. They arrived on the 19th December, and after living for a time in a hired house in the town, received a grant of land on which they built a mission house, outside the stockade, somewhere near the northern end of the present Barr Street. The house cost about five thousand rupees, and was in some quarters regarded as "far too sumptuous" for missionaries. It was "large and convenient, situated in a rural place about half a mile from the walls of the town. We have gardens enclosed, containing about two acres of ground, full of fruit trees of various kinds. In the dry season our situation is agreeable. We often enjoy a pleasant walk, within our own enclosure, or in some of the adjoining villages". In 1810 two more missionaries arrived, Couch and Prichett, members of the London Missionary Society, and they took up their residence with the Baptists until such time as they should gain enough knowledge of Burmese to fend for themselves. But the missions did not flourish. Brain died of dysentery after less than four months in the country, and Pritchett at his own request was transferred to India. Chater and his wife both suffered from bad health and in the year 1811 were transferred to Ceylon, leaving only Carey to carry on the work. He entered the service of the Burmese Government and in 1814 abandoned the mission. But by that time it had been reinforced by the arrival of the American Baptists, Judson and his wife, who took up their residence in the mission house in July 1813, and in the next few years yet other American missionaries arrived.[2]

To this mission house was attached a burial ground, which became the English cemetery of Rangoon.

The Burmese officials displayed considerable tolerance towards these English and American missionaries; but this tolerance was based on a misapprehension of their objects. They were regarded in the same light as the priests of the Armenian and Portuguese communities, who were not of a

[1] Sangermano (ed. Jardine) Note C; Bigandet, *History of the Catholic Burmese Mission*, p. 18 sqq.
[2] *Felix Carey and the English Baptist Mission in Burma.*

proselytising habit: "the Missionaries have been considered", noted Judson, "in no other light than as ministers to the English who reside here". It would further appear that the indifferent attitude of the authorities was dependent on their remaining in Rangoon; Canning was of opinion that they would never be permitted to settle in other parts of the country, and a warning against attempting to do so was conveyed to them by the Armenian akaukwun Baba Sheen.[1]

The same tolerance towards alien religious practices was shown in another respect; "by orders of Government," it was recorded, "no person is allowed to go up to the pagoda with their shoes on, but I saw many Europeans and native Christians breaking the order with impunity".[2]

The protestant missionaries seem to have been on good terms with the Roman priests, for one of the Italians lent Chater and Carey a book of translations of the scriptures to aid them in learning Burmese, and there seems to have been no difficulty placed in the way of their distributing Bibles among the "Portuguese" population. The opposition to their work came from the English community. In some cases the English inhabitants were not the type to regard religion seriously, while others held the common prejudice against missionaries. One, indeed, went so far as to tell them that all the troubles which afflicted Rangoon, including even a fire which destroyed much of the town, and also the war with Siam, were due to the admission of missionaries to the country.

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CHAPTER FIVE

ALAUNGPAYA'S RANGOON (2).

DURING the period from 1755 to 1824, Rangoon was by no means free from civil disturbances, for the Mons did not at any time entirely resign themselves to their vanquished state, although they never again succeeded in becoming a real threat to Burmese power. When he occupied Dagon Alaungpaya had worshipped at the Shwe Dagon and embellished it by re-gilding, thus indicating his supremacy over the Mons; but even after he had suppressed the rising of 1758-59 the Mons were always ready to rebel. In 1773, in the time of King Hsinbyushin, a number of Mons who had been conscripted for war against Siam mutinied; the army was at the time assembled at Martaban, and the Mons, being thus gathered together under arms and outnumbering the Burmese troops, seized the opportunity to rise. Led by three Mon chiefs, Dalla Khin, Dalla Hsin and Minasi, they suddenly attacked the Burmese, and killed a large number of them, the rest, under the Martaban Myowun, escaping to Rangoon pursued by the victorious rebels. Lulled into a false sense of security by fourteen years of peace, the Burmese were by no means prepared for this rising; moreover, the Hanthawaddy Myowun was at the time absent at the capital with his principal officers and most of the garrison. However, the Sitke, Shwedaungnawtha, who was temporarily in charge, proved equal to the emergency; at the first news of the rising, reinforcements were summoned from Henzada, Danubyu, and Padaung, and these manned the stockade. The Mons on arrival fired the suburbs and burnt some ships which were on the stocks, and three times tried in vain to storm the stockade. Then they established a state of siege, even entrenching themselves round the Fort. For seven days the siege went on, until the Hanthawaddy Myowun with some three thousand men arrived by boat from Upper Burma, and, aided by the gunfire of a Dutch ship that was in the port, forced the Mons to retreat. Lack of generalship, it was said, was responsible for their failure to take the weakly defended city. The Mons withdrew to the Salween, and after holding out for some twelve months were finally overthrown. Dalla Hsin and Minasi fled to Siam, but Dalla Khin was taken prisoner. There were a number of French vessels in the port at the time of the siege, but the captains declined to aid the rebels, and lay in hiding in a boat up one of the creeks. When the Myowun relieved the town he gained the impression, perhaps from the Dutch, the trade rivals of the French, that the missing officers had assisted the Mons, and he had a strict search made for them. When they were found, their arms were tied behind their backs and they were flung into the River, where all but one drowned. The exception was a man named Boutet, who had come to Rangoon from Pondichery and had been engaged in building a vessel of four hundred tons which the Mons

had just burnt. He was accompanied by his wife, who was a grand-daughter of the famous minister of Siam, Constance Phaulkon, and whom he had only recently married. He managed to keep afloat while he released his arms, no easy feat in the swift-running Rangoon River, and so contrived to reach the bank. Some other of the Frenchmen had their wives with them, and these, together with Boutet's wife, having been compelled to witness the murder of their husbands, were taken as slaves. Boutet's wife was the most beautiful of them; the Myowun took her, and sold her next day to an Armenian for the enormous sum of Rs. 400. But that day her husband reappeared in the town, as if risen from the dead, and so impressed were the Burmans by his apparently supernatural escape that they made no further attempt on his life; though it is not clear whether he regained his wife.[1]

The rebellion having been crushed, vengeance was exacted. In 1774 the King came to Rangoon. On his way he met the captured Mon leader, Dalla Khin, at Danubyu and ordered his execution. Having reached Rangoon he proceeded to carry out the kingly function of embellishing the Shwe Dagon. There was a prophecy that he who placed a Hti on the Pagoda would defeat all his enemies and would be recognised as the most powerful of kings; moreover, the Pagoda had suffered severely from an earthquake in the year 1769, and the iron Hti had been thrown down. To fulfill the terms of the prophecy and to impress the Mons with his greatness, the King therefore came to Rangoon, bringing with him the captive Mon King, Binnya Dalla, taken by Alaungpaya seventeen years before, and accompanied, it is said, by fifty thousand men. He had a new Hti made, of gold set with diamonds and rubies, to the weight of himself, his wife and his children; and not only did he impose this but he also raised the Pagoda to its present height of 327 feet, gilding it with his own weight in gold, 12 stone 3 pounds, at a cost of Rs. 94,000. Much treasure was deposited in the Pagoda by his lords, immense wealth being thrown in through, according to one account,[2] an opening in the top where the Hti was to be imposed.[3]

Further to impress the Mons he brought Binnya Dalla to his death. After nearly twenty years of imprisonment, the Mon king was brought in chains before the Yondaw, the Hanthawaddy Myowun presiding; he was accused of instigating the late rebellion, and despite his pleas was condemned to die. To emphasise the point, his execution was carried out by the common executioner so that all the circumstances of his death, both the trial and the execution, should s amp him as a common malefactor. On the 7th waxing of Tabaung the unfortunate captive was led in procession through the town and taken to Ava-bok (Pagoda Point), at the junction of the Hlaing and Panhlaing Rivers, where the execution took place. Many other Mons of high rank now suffered the same fate, and for the time being Mon resistance was again suppressed.

[1] Symes *op. cit.*, p. 75; Sonnerat *op. cit.*, p. 297; Cordier, *Les Français en Birmanie.*
[2] Sonnerat, *op. cit.*, p. 300.
[3] It seems probable that in the successive stages of the development of the Pagoda, each new structure was superimposed around the former one. *Cf.* Forchhammer: *First Buddhist Mission to Suvannabhumi*, p. 8.

It was said that when Binnya Dalla had been executed it was found that held in his hand was a piece of wax within which was concealed a magnificent ruby, the last remnant of his former glories; the ruby was handed over to Hsinbyushin.[1]

Nevertheless, Burmese hold on the Delta was not yet secure. In 1783, in the time of King Bodawpaya, Rangoon was involved in another rising. At sunset on the 8th September some three hundred Mons, armed only with bamboo spears and swords, rushed the suburb of Tatgale where they had landed from their boats, killing many of the inhabitants and severely wounding a couple of sailors from a French ship who had come to see what the noise was about. By 7 o'clock they had burst through the western gate of the stockade and hastened to the Yondaw and the Myowun's residence, ordering the people to keep to their houses as they went. The Myowun's house was fired, and the Myowun and the Akaukwun were killed, besides some fifty of the townsfolk who were attracted to the spot by the fire. Not realising the insignificance of the Mon force, the surviving officials and many of the townspeople fled for refuge to the neighbouring jungles; the few that remained were easily mastered. The Mons armed themselves with muskets from the garrison armoury and directed some Portuguese and Armenian sea-captains whom they had caught in the town to aid them, promising many rewards when their leader was successfully established as King. The streets were patrolled, and the Yondaw, which they made their headquarters, was defended by two hundred men: evidently there was organising ability among the Mons. Early next day the townsmen who remained were forced to help man the stockade; the merchants and ships' captains were compelled to drink the water of allegiance and the Burmans were made to do the same, any that objected being promptly decapitated.

The rest of that day was passed in establishing the new government in the town. The gates were kept closed and none could pass in or out without permission from the leader, who had now clad himself in silks to impress the people. A number of boats were stationed to guard the river-approaches to the town, while others were sent through the Delta creeks to raise the Mons, and the European ships in the harbour were approached for aid, which was urgently needed, for the Mons could not hold more than the gates and the Yondaw with any pretence of strength.

Early on the morning of the 10th the Burmans, who had now realised the insignificance of the insurgent force, sent some three hundred men to the town under the pretence of joining the Mons; they offered to drink the water of allegiance, and the Mons, trusting in the efficacy of this oath, opened the gates to them. The Mons spent the morning in preparing for an attack which was, sooner or later, inevitable. The Burmese townsmen were confined to their houses; small guns were put in boats for the defence of the riverside;

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[1] Trant *op. cit.*, p. 271.

and an order was sent to the captain of the French vessel *Bien-venue* to send eight of his men with the necessary tools to mount two cannon and to assist the defence. But the captain of the *Bien-venue*, M. Merlan, though willing enough to comply with this demand, was, fortunately for himself, somewhat dilatory, and before he had taken any action the Burmese attack had begun. An attack was made on one of the gates in the north face of the stockade, and four hundred men managed to force their way in and reach the Yondaw, where they came into conflict with the main body of Mons who were holding it. The Mons were now better armed than the Burmans, for having access to the armoury they had muskets and a small cannon as well as swords and spears; whereas the hastily gathered force of Burmans had only stones and bricks and pointed bamboos. The Mons were thus in the stronger position; but at eleven o'clock a hundred and fifty men led by a Siamese forced the west gate by hatchet blows, and, having a few muskets, were able to drive the Mons from that part of the town back towards the Yondaw. The three hundred Burmans who had enlisted under the Mon leader now turned against their pretended allies, and the Mons were besieged within the Yondaw which formed their stronghold. The fighting went on till evening, but the Mons were worn down by weight of numbers, and by eight o'clock all resistance was over, though the Burmese had lost many killed in the conflict. The Yewun, who was in charge after the death of the Myowun, hunted out all the Mons that could be found in the town and had them executed.

Meanwhile there had been a general rising in the Delta, and next morning at different times three boats full of Mons approached the town; the first was sunk by a well-directed cannon-shot, and those of its occupants who managed to swim ashore were at once put to the sword; another boat came ashore, its occupants believing that their friends held the town, and as soon as they landed they also were slain. The same fate befell those in the third boat. Nearly two hundred were thus killed, and the River was littered with their corpses.

It was evident that the whole Delta was up, and the small and disorganised Burmese force was in a precarious position. The Yewun therefore required the captain of the *Bien-venue* to assist the defence by sending his men to hold the wharf; and, no doubt rejoicing that he had been dilatory in lending aid to the Mons, the captain did so. The other foreigners in the town and ships were made to guard the gates, bands of Burmese inhabitants being placed under their orders for the purpose; perforce the Yewun had to entrust the defence largely to foreigners for lack of other support.

On the following day, the 12th, one of the Mon leaders was brought to the Yondaw. He confessed the plan of the rebels, saying that the nucleus of the band came from Negrais and numbered only ten men; their original intention had been nothing more than dacoity, plundering the villages; but their party increased to three hundred and they decided to plunder Rangoon.

He made no mention of any political intention. When asked why they had not in fact pillaged the town, he explained that their numbers were too small to cope with the large number of foreigners in the place, which he placed at one hundred and fifty Europeans and two hundred "black Christians", that is, presumably, Goanese. They had therefore waited for assistance, with the intention that when their force grew strong enough they would put all the women and children of the foreigners in a big house outside the stockade and set it on fire; the ships' captains they would keep and, having filled the foreign vessels with plunder, would compel the captains to navigate them to Negrais. Another chief taken the next day made a similar confession. According to other accounts, however, the attack was part of a deliberate attempt to restore the independence of the Mon kingdom. It was said that a fisherman, named Natchien, a man of low birth, who was inspired by a prophecy that a man of his profession was to free the Mon people and reestablish the kingdom, induced a number of Mons from the Dalla district to aid him in a surprise attack on Rangoon;[1] another statement is that the leader was a man of influence among the Mons, who was inspired by a dream that the kingdom was about to be restored.[2]

The inhabitants of the town stayed under arms on the night of the 12th and the Europeans still guarded the gates. In the morning two more boat-loads of Mons arrived, and the occupants suffered the fate of their compatriots of two days' before. In the afternoon a further fifty boats were seen in the distance and all night long there was a great alarm in the town; the leaders of these boats came towards the shore in the morning and offered to assist in defending the town, but the Yewun, suspecting them to be Mons, refused to admit them, and they promptly fled, thus justifying his suspicions. The rest of the day was spent in carrying corpses out of the town; and about one hundred and fifty prisoners, probably townsmen who had been forced by the Mons to drink the water of allegiance, were taken to the Execution Ground in carts and there decapitated.

On the 15th twenty-two boats of well-armed men approached the town, but to the relief of the inhabitants, when they reached the wharf they were found to be a Burmese force under the command of the Minister of the Female Elephants.[3] Nevertheless, the Minister was regarded with suspicion by the local officials, perhaps because of jealousy, and the Yewun refused to admit his men to the town. So two days passed peacefully, and then the Minister levied a fine of Rs. 3,000 on the foreigners for having drunk the water of allegiance at the demand of the Mons; but as he promised to arrange the matter at the King's Court if the fine were paid, it was evident that he was in fact demand-

[1] Symes *op. cit.*, p. 101: *Natchien* — Nga Kyin.

[2] Sangermano *op. cit.*, p. 57.

[3] Cordier: *Les Français en Birmanie*, gives as the Burmese title of this officer "Amahourne." "Ama" is presumably *amat* and "hourne" is *wun*. But *Amatwun* is a curious formation, and, even if possible, in no way implies "Minister (or, as Cordier puts it, "Prince"), of the Female Elephants."

ing blackmail. The Europeans refused at first to pay, since many of them had not actually been guilty of this disloyalty, but, no doubt in view of the presence of his force, they offered him a gift of the same amount, and this he willingly accepted. The Christians contributed half and the Muslims and Malabaris the other half. But on the 5th October arrived the Einshewun, who had been sent to restore order and to stop the executions of Mons which were still going on. He held an enquiry into the whole affair and on the 11th set out for the capital again, taking a number of Mon captives with him. With him went also the Minister of the Female Elephants, to answer for his conduct in levying an unauthorised fine. A week later a boat arrived from the capital with an order that the chief officers of the town should proceed to Amarapura in chains to explain how they had come to allow the Mons to seize the place. The Minister of the Female Elephants, who had made an abortive attempt to escape from the Einshewun on his way northwards, but had been recaptured at Myanaung and put in irons, was now taken to the capital with the Rangoon officials.

Apart from those killed in battle or on landing from their boats, some five hundred Mons had been executed, and this vengeance kept the Delta reasonably quiet for the next forty years. Moreover, the government of the Delta was made, it would appear, somewhat less severe, and an attempt was made to eradicate Mon nationalism by abandoning discrimination between Mon and Burman, with so much superficial success that in 1813 a missionary noted that so far as language was concerned "the Peguans no longer exist as a nation" between Martaban and Ava, though in Tenasserim they still maintained their own language and national characteristics.[1]

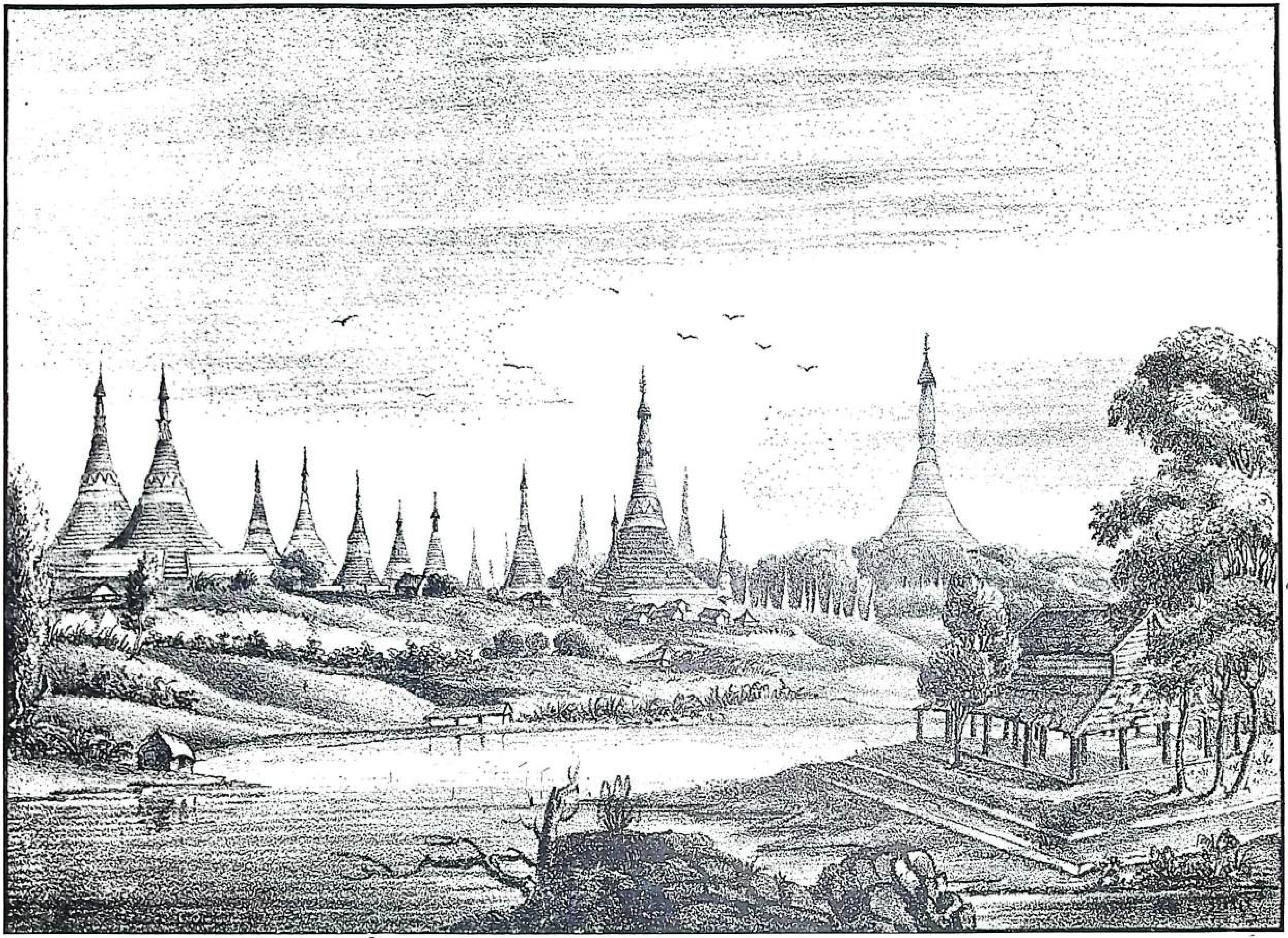
Further to conciliate the Mons, the King resolved to reestablish the old Mon capital of Pegu, and in 1790 he directed the Myowun to take up his residence there; but it was impossible for Pegu to rival Rangoon with its great commercial advantages, and Rangoon remained the chief city of the Delta, though the Myowun had to divide his time between the two cities.[2]

These rebellions must have done much damage to the town; but it soon recovered. Though the fragile houses of the suburbs were easily burnt, they were also easily rebuilt. After each disturbance the trade of the port revived and life resumed its normal course.

In 1786 Rangoon was honoured by a visit from the King, Bodawpaya, who, having suffered defeat in an invasion of Siam, fled back to Burma, and "such was his apprehension, that he did not think himself safe till he found himself in the vicinity of Rangoon".[3] He worshipped at the Pagoda, and presented it with a great bell, seven and a half feet in diameter at the mouth, inscribed in Burmese and Pali.

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[1] *Felix Carey and the English Baptist Mission in Burma;* T. C. Robertson, *Political Incidents of the First Burmese War*, p. 141.
[2] Symes *op. cit.*, p. 184.
[3] Sangermano *op. cit.*, p. 59.



Grierson: Twelve Select Views of the Seat of War.

VIEW ON A LAKE NEAR RANGOON, 1824.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century there was a renewal of official relations between the Burmese Government and the East India Company, and Rangoon was visited thereafter by a series of embassies. Since the 1760's official intercourse had been restricted to casual letters usually making enquiries about missing vessels; but in the 1790's the troubles which arose on the frontier between Arakan and Chittagong[1] made it desirable for the East India Company to establish a regular channel of communication with the Burmese Government for the solving of diplomatic difficulties, and the despatch of a mission was determined on. There were other reasons for this decision also. Trade between Rangoon and British India had increased considerably in recent years; it was now sufficiently important for the Company to take an interest in it once more, especially as teak was so essential for the shipyards of Calcutta and Madras which drew all their supply from Burma; while the return trade from British India to Rangoon was of sufficient promise to call for encouragement. The vain dream of an extensive overland trade to China through Rangoon which continued to haunt the minds of English merchants for the next hundred years was another reason for promoting friendly relations with Burma. Moreover, representations were not infrequently received from English merchants in Rangoon of oppression and injustice suffered at the hands of the port officials, and it was desired to rectify such grievances. Furthermore, the maintenance of a French agent in Rangoon had given the French a degree of influence which the English Company lacked, and when war with France broke out in 1793 steps had to be taken to counteract that influence and especially to prevent any possible establishment in Rangoon of a French settlement which might be a base for attacks on Calcutta and on the Company's shipping. It was further desirable to make representations about the misuse of the Burmese flag by French privateers. Hence the appearance in the Rangoon River on the 19th March 1795 of Captain Michael Symes, who had been deputed by the Company's government to negotiate an understanding relating to these matters.

It is apparent that the authorities of Rangoon regarded Symes with suspicion, the more so since he was accompanied by a guard of sixteen sepoys. He was not at first allowed to reside within the stockade, but was allotted a a house on the water's edge five hundred yards below the town, where the tides actually ran up under the piles of the house. This building must have been near the Botataung Pagoda, though Symes, in common with other writers of the period, makes no mention of this Pagoda.[2] The sailors of the ships in the harbour were at first forbidden to visit Symes's vessel, the *Sea Horse*, and it was several days before his men were allowed to go to the bazaar. While the authorities were glad to encourage foreign traders to settle

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[1] See *King-Bering.*

[2] According to legend the Pagoda is a very ancient one, having been built by the King of Ukkalapa on the site where his son's body had been burnt. It was, says the legend, erected by one thousand officers *(Bo-taung)*.

in Rangoon and to marry into the country, they were not too sure of their hold on the Delta, and foreign officials were therefore naturally suspect. Moreover, foreigners of other than English nationality were averse to the establishment of the Company's influence in Rangoon, and they sowed the seeds of mistrust in the officials' minds. They had, in some cases managed to obtain commercial advantages over their competitors, and they wished to retain those advantages. However, Symes managed to allay suspicion, and a month later he was allowed to hire "two respectable houses" within the stockade.

Symes went on to the capital, and in his absence there arrived at Rangoon a Burmese vessel from Mauritius, which brought news of French victories in Europe; the French agent in Rangoon sent this news to the capital, thus causing Symes some difficulty. But he was successful in obtaining an undertaking which, if carried out, would have been of great benefit to the merchants of Rangoon. It was agreed that goods imported in British ships should pay a duty of ten per cent only and be free from the arbitrary exactions which had often been imposed; that a regular scale of pilotage and anchorage dues should be laid down; that the fees of the officials should be defined; that no more than five per cent should be levied as export duty on teak; that no obstacles should be placed in the way of trade; that British merchants might employ what interpreters they pleased; and that the Company might station an agent in Burma.

The permission thus given to maintain a representative in Burma resulted in the arrival in Rangoon in October 1796 of Captain Hiram Cox who had been sent to reside at Rangoon "to maintain a friendly intercourse with your Majesty, and superintend commercial concerns", as his credentials stated.[1] The circumstances of Cox's arrival were as unfortunate as all succeeding circumstances of his mission, for the ship in which he came went aground at the mouth of the River. He actually arrived on the 10th of the month; but did not land till the 12th owing to a protracted argument with the local authorities about procedure: they wishing him to go to the Custom House like a private trader, and he firmly refusing. He was, ultimately, successful in his determination, and was officially received at the Wharf. In some respects he was treated with more courtesy than Symes had experienced, for he was allowed to live in "a capacious lower-roomed brick house" within the stockade, and was taken to his residence with every mark of respect: "the town battery", he records, "saluted me with fifteen guns. Mr. Jhansey, the Shabunder, and Baba-sheen, the collector of the revenues of the province, the two superior members of government here, received me at the pier-head. From thence I proceeded through an avenue formed by the inhabitants seated on the ground, (preceded by the officers of the police to preserve order), towards the house provided for my residence. On passing the custom-house, a band of musicians, with dancers, exhibited for my entertainment;

[1] *Bengal Secret and Political Consultations* 19th September, 1796, No. 20.

and, at the head of the principal street, another band of Siamese dancers were stationed . . . . Immediately after I reached the house, I was visited by the remaining principal members of the government in their robes of state, who congratulated me on my safe arrival".[1] But he found that the terms of the agreement secured by Symes had not been adhered to. Many complaints were made to him by English merchants of unjust treatment, and in particular that monopolies had been granted to a Muslim named Boodham, "an insolent unprincipled villain", who thus enjoyed "the exclusive privilege of trade at Rangoon". Merchants of all nationalities who happened to be in difficulties with the authorities looked to Cox for assistance: "Mr. Agazar, one of the principal merchants of Rangoon", who at the time of Symes's visit had been a monopolist but who now, owing it would seem to some variation in the fortunes of his friends at Court, had lost his influence, stated that "all the merchants considered themselves under the protection of the English Government", while a Parsi merchant also sought his aid against Boodham's monopolies.[2] After a delay of nearly two months in Rangoon, Cox was allowed to go to the capital to present his credentials, the sum of Rs. 35,000 being collected from the inhabitants of Rangoon for the expenses of the journey; but he was greatly disappointed by the unfriendly reception which he now endured. It was apparent that many of the principal ministers were better disposed towards the French than towards the English, and were giving encouragement to the privateers which infested the Bay of Bengal and which frequently sheltered in the Burmese ports. These privateers did much harm to English shipping and, privateering being not far removed from piracy, often to Burmese shipping as well; but they had the goodwill of the officials. The proposed establishment of an agent of the Company in Rangoon roused mistrust in the minds of the Burmese, the more so, no doubt, since merchants of all nationalities were looking to him for protection against the local officials whose authority thus appeared to be threatened. The influence of men like Boodham was thrown against the Company, as well as the influence of various French agents. Further the success of the French privateers gave the impression that the Company was weak; "If the English were more powerful by sea, why were their ships afraid to come to Rangoon as formerly", it was asked, and "why did we permit them to take the Burman shipping?" Nor did Cox help matters by proposing to improve the King's finances by forming a monopoly in salt, betelnut and balachaung, to be managed by the Hanthawaddy Myowun and himself, the two managers "to divide the surplus revenue between them". This peculiar proposal was still talked of in Burma forty years later.[3]

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[1] Cox *op. cit.*, p. 9.

[2] Cox *op. cit.*. p. 93.

[3] Bayfield, *Historical Review of the Political Relations between the British Government in India and the Empire of Ava*, p. 15.

After nearly a year of disappointment. Cox returned to Rangoon, where he arrived on the 1st November 1797. He found conditions in Rangoon no better than they had been at the capital. In disgust he wanted to return to Calcutta, but was not allowed to leave the country; while the merchants were still complaining to him of the oppression which they suffered. Suspicion of the English was so great that orders were issued to the pilots to run ashore any vessel that came up armed, while the captain of one ship was theatened with a rope's-end on his own quarter deck by a "chokey peon" for attempting to bring his ship up without a pilot. Even letters belonging to the mission were opened under the pretext of searching for diamonds, and it was ordered that Cox's stores should not be allowed the usual diplomatic privilege but should be opened at the Custom House. It was evident that no good purpose could be served by Cox's continued residence in Burma, and in February 1798 the Company's government recalled him. At the last the Myowun showed a certain degree of civility, for he wanted permission to purchase arms and ammunition in Calcutta; and at the same time the ministers at the capital, also desiring to obtain a supply of arms, sent orders granting land for a factory in Rangoon. But by the time that these orders arrived Cox had left Rangoon, on the 1st May 1798, leaving conditions in Rangoon for the foreign merchants no better than when he arrived, and with shipping still endangered by the privateers who frequented the Burmese ports and were slowly destroying the trade with India.

Rangoon remained unvisited by further missions until the year 1802. The cessation of war with France did not make it any the less desirable for the Company to weaken French influence in Burma, the more so as the peace was not likely to be enduring. Therefore on the 30th May 1802 Colonel Symes arrived in Rangoon once more with an escort of one hundred sepoys to seek a further treaty, to secure protection for merchants against oppression, to establish a Resident at the capital and a Consul in Rangoon, to obtain a grant of the island of Negrais or some commercial concession equivalent thereto, and also to settle the vexed question of the Maghs on the Arakan frontier. Like Cox, Symes had some difficulty in securing an appropriate reception; he also was requested to go to the Custom House and he also refused. In the end he was received in the Exchange, "the floor of which was carpeted and the sides screened with ornamental flags", where the Yewun, who was acting in place of the Myowun, who had been summoned to the capital in disgrace, kept him waiting thirty minutes before arriving. In general he was treated with incivility and distrust; he was even forbidden to allow his ship, the *Mornington*, to fire the usual morning and evening gun on the grounds that "being wholly unaccustomed to hear the sound of cannon, and it being a breach of law in a Burman to fire even a musquet at such untimely hours, the report of our gun created an alarm so general as to endanger every pregnant woman in the City with miscarriage". It was apparent that the feeling in Rangoon was antipathetic; two French vessels had recently been

sent from Mauritius bringing arms, and though one had been wrecked in the Gulf of Martaban, the other arrived safely, and French influence was therefore in the ascendant. The statement made by the French that "the peace lately concluded was earnestly solicited by the English" was fully believed in Rangoon, and was accepted as evidence of the superior power of the French.

Symes noted that shipbuilding was still flourishing and wrote, with evident exaggeration, that "vessels, several of them of considerable burthen, are laid down and launched every week."

In August he proceeded to the capital where, to his surprise, he found conditions to be much as Cox had reported. The arrival of the arms from Mauritius had evidently had the same effect at the capital as it had in Rangoon, and "the undisguised partiality of the King for the French" was expressly commented on by Symes. "His Majesty", he reported, "was highly displeased with the English" and had been for some time in correspondence with their enemies. "The true characteristics of the English nation are pride, violence and rapacity, whereas the French, on the contrary, are gentle, courteous, peaceful, and quiet", was the King's view. Symes also learnt that three or four years previous an emissary had been sent to Mergui to invite the French cruisers which happened to be there to come to Rangoon, with promises of security, liberty of commerce, and every sort of provisions; and when two privateers arrived in the River, the King had given them exemption from the usual dues, and a gratuitous supply of provisions. The proposal for a grant of land at Negrais moreover, caused, by Symes's own statement, a good deal of consternation, and confirmed the Court in its suspicions of English intentions. All possible steps were taken to show the inferiority of the English, and Rangoon now saw the curious sight of an American, named Bevan, supercargo of one of the French ships, a Frenchman named Desbroulais who had recently been released from the Calcutta gaol, and two Franco-Burmese youths, being dressed up as ambassadors of the French government and sent in state to the capital as a set-off to the English mission. After three months during which he had succeeded in completing no business at all, Symes returned to Rangoon, where he arrived on the 11th January, 1803. The interim between this date and the departure of Symes on the 20th was full of excitement for the inhabitants of Rangoon.

The Yewun, who was at the time in charge, sent a message to Symes as his boats neared the town that "he would not suffer the ship to salute, as there were several persons sick in the fort, whom the noise of the guns would disturb". Symes was not content to accept this order, and his ship fired the usual seventeen guns as he approached. But when he landed he found the gates of the stockade shut against him.

Fortunately for him, a house had been engaged by his subordinates outside the stockade, near the water's edge. In response to a demand that he should attend the Yondaw in person, he sent one of his subordinates, a

Mr. Campbell. The Yewun, when Campbell appeared, asserted that the ship had fired shot against the Fort, and in proof of this statement he produced the wadding of some of the guns. Campbell endeavoured to explain the mistake, but the Yewun refused to be pacified, and Campbell withdrew in alarm. The next day the Akaukwun came to Symes and urged him to send a shot and a wad to the Yondaw so that the Yewun might perceive the difference, and this was done, the interpreter, Mr. Roland, accompanying the messenger. The Yewun was still not satisfied, however, and asserted that he would detain Roland until one of the ship's officers came to answer for the insult offered to the Fort. Symes sent Campbell with a military officer to the Yondaw to rescue Roland, and this they did, suffering no harm other than abusive language accompanied by the threat that the ship would be detained until orders had been received from the Court. Symes therefore directed the ship to be prepared for defence, and sent for Messrs. Taylor and Murray, the principal English merchants, and agreed with them upon a signal which should be a warning to the European inhabitants to leave the town and take refuge on the *Mornington*. That night the sepoys slept on their arms, while much tumult was heard from the town. The next day passed without incident, except that Symes's men were allowed to bring away some of his property that remained in a house within the stockade, and that the Yewun again asserted that he would not allow the ship to depart. On the 15th the gates were opened, and a Portuguese interpreter to Captain Frost of the *Mornington* was liberated after being hung up by his heels in prison. A Muslim's ship which lay between the *Mornington* and the stockade had dropped higher up the River on the tide at Symes's request; at midnight by the Yewun's order she had resumed her former station. Symes therefore now directed Captain Frost to send an armed boat's crew to moor her elsewhere, with the statement that if she came back her cables would be cut. There was meanwhile still more excitement in the town, for the Yewun had issued a warning that the English intended to make a night attack and cut everyone's throat. The 16th was quiet. On the 17th a party of Burmans came and assured Symes that many of their people were opposed to the Yewun; and on the 18th a messenger came to apologise on the Yewun's behalf, bringing presents which were declined. On the 19th the excitement had subsided. Two Gaungs came to Symes and stated that the Yewun was at dagger's drawn with the Myowun, that each had his party in the town, and that the Myowun's party was ready to break out in open rebellion at any time. Thus the Yewun could not afford to commence hosilities. On the 20th Symes embarked on the *Mornington* and set sail, the battery firing a seventeen-gun salute as he left. So ended Symes's second and last mission to Burma.[1]

Relations with the Burmese being thus strained, and with the prospect of renewed war with the French before it, the Company had no desire for a

[1] For Symes's mission, see *Bengal Secret and Politcal Consultations* 29th April, 1802, No. 20 sqq.

definite rupture. Therefore Lieutenant John Canning was in the same year, 1803, despatched to Rangoon as agent on the part of Colonel Symes, to assure the Burmese Government of the goodwill of the Company and at the same time to observe the development of French influence. So Canning, who had accompanied Symes's last mission, arrived in Rangoon on the 31st May 1803, in the ship *Henry Addington*, Captain Robertson. The weather being threatening when the ship neared the bar, it was thought prudent not to wait for a pilot but to proceed up the River. The ship stopped at the Chokey, where Canning learnt to his relief that the Yewun had been recalled to the capital, and that the Akaukwun Jaunsi was in charge of the province. On the 1st June, Canning went ashore and was greeted on the wharf by Jaunsi "in his robes of ceremony (a green velvet great coat with a profusion of gold lace)" and taken to the Custom House where carpets were spread and tea and sweetmeats were waiting for him. The Sitke and Baba Sheen, the Akunwun, also came to greet him, as did a number of the European inhabitants, "the Custom House being a place of public resort". After some conversation he went to look at a house within the stockade, which he rented. He was informed that though all his baggage must go to the Custom House, nothing would be taken; but this promise was not kept, for all his trunks were opened and the presents he had brought for the officials were removed. Canning, however, was well pleased at his friendly reception, which was unexpected after the circumstances of Symes's departure. The reason for it appeared to be that the Siamese had won some success in their war with Burma and that trouble with the Company was therefore to be avoided. It appeared that conditions in Rangoon had latterly improved somewhat, for Canning learned that "everything had remained perfectly quiet" and "that the Raywoon shewed more justice and lenity to foreigners than he had been accustomed to", since Symes departed. Nevertheless, the local officials displayed a not unnatural curiosity about the object of Canning's visit, and were evidently suspicious, failing to credit his statement that he had been sent to Rangoon only to act as a regular means of communication between the two Governments; but he was relieved to learn from the Roman padre Don Vincenzo (Sangermano) that it was highly improbable that the French would be allowed to effect any territorial settlement in Burma. Trade he found to be poor, for the difficulties imposed by the Government tended to drive foreign merchants away, and also a large quantity of trade was going by coastal shipping along the Arakan coast to Bassein and thence by the Delta creeks inland, while the officials at Cheduba and Ramri were attracting trade to their ports by passing goods free of duty in return for bribes, whereas in Rangoon the regular 12½ per cent was exacted. Few ships were on the stocks; only five in number. Further, the rains were late in breaking, and many cattle had been lost for want of water.

But the complexion of political affairs was soon changed by the arrival in September of the French brig *Jeune Africaine*, bringing forty-six chests

each containing twenty-five muskets, many bales of cloth, and liquors and specie besides, the whole cargo said to be for sale. The ship had left Bordeaux about a year before. It was stated that most of the muskets were purchased by Jaunsi for the government, but in reality one thousand of them were brought as a present for the King, and the officials were presented with two muskets each as well; and the captain stated that another ship with even more valuable presents was due within a couple of months.[1] Soon afterwards the Yewun returned from the Court, evidently quite in favour with the King, and resumed charge of the government. He was civil to Canning at first, but a few days later issued an order that all foreign correspondence must be censored. Two days after this order was issued, letters arrived for Canning by the captain of the Company's armed brig *Waller*, which had anchored at the mouth of the River to avoid the difficulty occasioned by the rule that guns must be landed. The Akaukwun demanded that these letters be opened and read to the Yewun, but Canning firmly refused to agree, and in the end the Yewun gave way. Canning was the more determined in his attitude since any casual expression in a letter which annoyed the Yewun might evoke his violent temper, with very likely serious consequences to Canning and all other British subjects in the town. It may be observed that Canning was technically only a private agent to Symes and had not any public capacity; his attitude therefore seems irregular. However, he sent a letter to the Yewun warning him that persistence in the demand would lead him to return to Bengal; but the messenger who took the letter to the Yondaw had his umbrella taken from him and thrown into the street, a stone was cast at him, and he was himself then thrown into the street after his umbrella; and when a letter was sent back by the Captain of the *Waller* from the mouth of the River, it was at once taken to the Yondaw and opened. Canning promptly addressed the Yewun informing him of his intention of sailing forthwith, but did not put his threat into execution. Further letters arrived and were detained at the Yondaw, but were then sent on to Canning after a day's delay, unopened. But yet another letter was opened, and so on the 13th November Canning went down the River and boarded the *Waller* for Bengal. It was from the Company's point of view unfortunate that Canning should have had to leave Rangoon at a time when the commander of the French *Jeune Africaine*, who had been three months in the place and showed no signs of leaving it, was about to visit the capital. However, the next month the Hanthawaddy Myowun, who had regained the royal favour, resumed charge of the province, and he was generally regarded as more favourably disposed to the English than was the Yewun. But the practice of opening foreign letters did not cease.

On the resumption of war between Great Britain and France, the depredations of the French privateers were renewed, and caused a good deal of

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[1] *Bengal Secret and Political Consultations* 5th July, 1804, No. 125.

alarm to the merchants in Rangoon. The career of the privateer *Pariel* is instructive. The *Pariel* was a small brig of 45 feet keel, commanded by one Quenet and manned by thirty Europeans. She left Mauritius in March 1804 and reached the coast of the Delta in June. Soon afterwards she captured the *Trial*, a sloop sailing from Madras to Rangoon; and, the *Trial* being better suited to his purpose, Quenet took her to Rangoon where she was refitted, and then set sail in her, having renamed her *Pariel*, leaving the original *Pariel* in the port to be sold. Early in July he seized one of the pilot-boats, and then lay concealed behind Elephant Point "a projecting point of land covered with high trees" as it was at that period. He had not long to wait, for there arrived the *Cartier*, from Penang, and when one of her passengers, a ship's master named Turnbull, put off in a boat to procure a pilot, the occupants of the pilot-boat which he met fired on him and made him prisoner. The pilot-boat then went to board the *Cartier*, but her captain, seeing that something was wrong, prevented the enemy from boarding and stood out to sea, pursued by the privateer which he was able to outsail after the exchange of a few shots. On the 11th July, a few days after taking Turnbull, Quenet captured the *Harriot*, of Chittagong, to which he again transferred, renaming her also the *Pariel*. The late *Harriot* was a largish ship, of 450 tons, armed with four 12-pounders. Her lascar crew Quenet kept, but he put Turnbull and his other English prisoners on board the late *Trial*, which had been damaged, and sent them to Rangoon. Unlike most privateersmen, Quenet treated his prisoners well, and did not deprive them of their personal property. The prisoners were released at Rangoon, and Turnbull purchased the original *Pariel* and renamed her the *Ann*; he was still commanding her on the Calcutta-Rangoon passage in 1807.

The *Pariel* could not, it was considered, have continued her career without the assistance of the Rangoon officials, whose partiality for the French caused them to lend her assistance despite the fact that the port depended principally on its trade with British India. When the vessel first appeared off the coast, her officers were received in state by the Yewun, who offered them every assistance and wished them success in their conflicts with the English; and despite a protest from the English merchants of the port, the privateersmen were allowed to stay for five days in the harbour equipping the *Trial*. The Yewun, it was reported, was quite willing for the French to make Rangoon a regular base, but other officials pointed out that the revenue would suffer by the loss of customs dues, so he contented himself with authorising the privateer to take provisions in the port provided she left expeditiously; and thereafter, though there is no evidence that he supplied her with stores of a military nature, he sent her frequent supplies of provisions. In consequence the *Pariel* was able to linger off the mouth of the River, and the merchants found that their business was seriously incommoded, for the ships in the port dared not go to sea for fear of immediate capture.

One ship, the brig *Sally*, tried to avoid the *Pariel* by making a passage through the Bassein Creek to Negrais; and off the mouth of the China Bakir her captain found that five of the Frenchmen and eight lascars were ashore, trading. He resolved to take the boat in which they had landed, and a conflict ensued, fought on Burmese territory, as a result of which the leader of the French was wounded, and the rest surrendered. The Captain of the *Sally* thereupon returned to Rangoon with his prisoners to explain the circumstances. The hostility generally felt towards the English was shown at China Bakir village, where the people demanded that the French should be given up and had to be deterred from rescuing them by threat of forcible resistance.

The officials now became alarmed at the probability of serious trouble with the English, and therefore sent a number of war-boats down the River to take the *Pariel*, but they returned without having made an attack. A Chulia vessel was plundered by the *Pariel* soon afterwards, and as much of the cargo belonged to Burmese traders the excitement was so great that the French in Rangoon were in danger of their lives for a time.

The *Pariel* remained off the Pegu coast till the end of July, and then withdrew to Mergui, a favourite haunt of privateers.

These happenings led to a protest to the Company's Government from two ship's captains against "the unparalleled injustice of the Birmah Government to the British commanders and merchants trading to the port of Rangoon" which had "arrived at that pitch that it is incumbent on those concerned to state the same."[1]

It does not appear that any action was taken by the Company, nor is it easy to see what action, short of a demonstration in force, was possible. But the circumstances clearly indicate the difficulties with which the commerce of Rangoon was attended.

The problem of neutrality caused much trouble at this period. A Captain Purser in this same year 1804 seized a ship lying off the Danot watch-post, evidently because it was French, an episode which led to the reduction of the Akaukwun from his office for a time: presumably because the Government held him responsible for what occurred in the port and the River. Again in the following year 1805 *H.M.S. Albatross* arrived in the River and demanded the surrender of the *Betsy* which had been taken by the French and brought to Rangoon. This demand was refused and in consequence the *Albatross* detained a vessel, the *Regina*, sailing from Mauritius to Rangoon under Burmese colours, whereupon the British subjects in Rangoon were imprisoned and threatened with death. Subsequently the *Regina* was given up to its owners, its detention being disapproved by the Company's Government.

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[1] *Bengal Secret and Political Consultations* 20th June, 1805, Nos. 446, 449 — 451.

The privateer danger continued for some years, and to make matters worse, early in 1809 a blockade of the French islands was declared by the British. Naturally trade was bad in that and the succeeding year, for the French Islands, long almost completely cut off from communication with Europe, had been drawing extensive supplies from Burma. The taking of Mauritius and Réunion in 1810 eased the situation to some extent, but the internal condition of Burma was bad. The war with Siam continued and the whole country was reported to be in a state of confusion.[1] On the 13th January 1810, moreover, a disastrous fire broke out and destroyed most of the town of Rangoon, with considerable loss of life. Nearly all the merchants were ruined, while the poorer inhabitants were in some cases driven to robbery out of sheer desperation. There was, indeed, reason to believe that the fire had been deliberately started by incendiaries as a protest against the heavy taxation and the conscription for the Siamese war,[2] for letters threatening this had been found one morning lying at the door of the Yondaw a month or so before the fire occurred.[3]

The Siamese war, moreover, was causing consternation in Rangoon; for it was at one time feared that the enemy would be victorious and would occupy the town.[4] There was famine in Burma in these years; the price of food doubled; and dacoity became common. "The misery of the people is beyond description", wrote an observer in December 1809. "Children of various ages were repeatedly brought to me, whose fathers had been driven to the war and whom their mothers begged me to accept in hopes of procuring for their offspring that sustenance they were unable to afford. The wretched inhabitants dragged from their homes or publicly sold if unable to pay the exorbitant requisitions of the Government, to avoid famine and disease in a camp or the miseries of slavery, have in numerous bands had recourse to open rebellion".[5] Even Rangoon was in danger from these rebel-dacoits; the fortifications were strengthened lest the rebels should attack the town; while villages near by were indeed attacked and plundered. Many of the people of Rangoon fled from the town to the country districts for a time, thinking it safer there than in Rangoon, and it was said that the number of inhabited houses fell from 5,000 to 1,500.[6] Under such conditions, it is not surprising that the trade of the port almost collapsed. It was stated that in 1809 not half the usual number of ships entered the port, and in March 1810 it was noted that "there is now very little trade between this place and Bengal."[7] The merchants rapidly became impoverished, and a number of Europeans were in such distress that they left the country altogether.

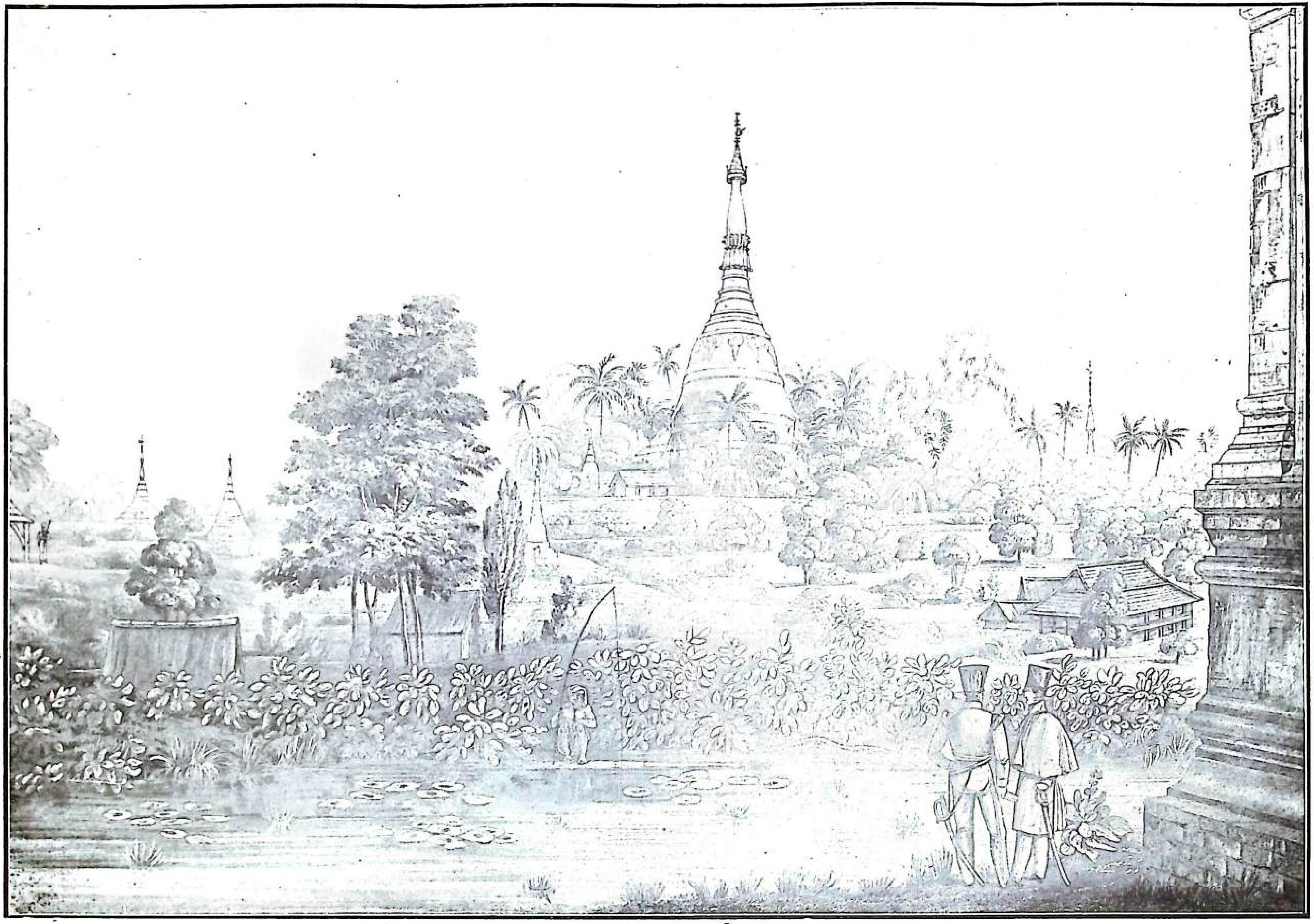
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[1] *Periodical Accounts of the English Baptist Mission*, 14th November, 1809.
[2] *A Burma Diary of 1810.*
[3] *Bengal Political Consultations* 29th May, 1810, No. 1.
[4] *Periodical Accounts of the English Baptist Mission*, 23rd October, 1810.
[5] *Bengal Political Consultations ibid.*
[6] Hamilton: *Description of Hindustan*, II. 795.
[7] *A Burma Diary of 1810.*

In 1809 when the blockade of the French islands was established Canning was once more sent to Rangoon to convey a warning that any vessel communicating with the French territories would be detained, and at the same time to explain the nature of a blockade, which to the Burmese was unfamiliar; he was also to endeavour to soothe their undoubted annoyance at the certain diminution of the Rangoon trade; and he was further directed to observe the extent of French influence in the country.

Canning reached Rangoon on the 2nd October and was again courteously received; although the Yewun was once more in charge of the government, there was no difficulty about securing freedom from customs examination of his baggage. At the same time, he had difficulty in explaining why a war between French and English should interfere with the trade of Burma. The return of the Myowun to the province at the end of the month appeared to make relations even more cordial; and so matters continued until on the 10th February 1810 he set out for Amarapura. A tax of Rs. 20/- was levied on each house in the town to meet the cost of the transport of the mission; and Canning reckoned that three quarters of the proceeds went into the pockets of the officials. When he reached the capital he found the attitude of the Burmese Government more friendly and civil than in former days, and he was able to secure a prohibition to the Rangoon officials against issuing passes to vessels bound to the French islands. He returned to Rangoon, where he arrived on the 14th April, meeting on his way down the River the unfortunate Myowun who had again been summoned to the Court in disgrace. The Yewun had resumed charge, and had detained Canning's letters; but when a new Myowun arrived the letters were surrendered. The demands which the Burmese Government was putting forward for the surrender by the Company of Chittagong and Dacca seemed to Canning likely to cause grave difficulties, however, and before leaving for Bengal on the 19th April he privately informed the English merchants of the situation so that they might take such steps as seemed to them suitable to secure their position against the risk of war.

Burmo-British relations were made worse by the recrudescence of Magh invasions on the Arakan frontier in the year 1811, and in October of that year Canning once more arrived in Rangoon in the Company's *Amboyna* with the object of removing from the minds of the King and his ministers the suspicions which they entertained that the Company had instigated or encouraged the Maghs. The Burmese authorities, convinced that the Company was supporting the Maghs, had indulged in reprisals against the English subjects in Rangoon by placing an embargo upon such British ships as were in the port, though the Myowun had released them after an interview with the British merchants. However, Canning, who appears to have been on good terms with the Myowun, was at first able to persuade him of the Company's innocence, and for a time all was well. The Myowun even presented to Mrs. Canning a house on an island in the Kandawgale for which she



Marryat, Thornton & Moore : Illustrations of the Burmese War.

VIEW OF THE GREAT DAGON PAGODA TO THE WESTWARD OF THE GREAT ROAD, 1824

expressed admiration.[1] Meanwhile Rangoon was made a base for the force which was to be sent against the Maghs; and a special tax, one of those impositions to which Rangoon was liable, was levied on the town to meet the cost. Two brigs were fitted out with six six-pounder guns each and two hundred men, the crews being impressed from the ships in the harbour, and another brig belonging to the English merchant Taylor was hired in addition. Further, a flotilla of river boats was prepared. The flotilla was not well equipped; "their guns are of all calibres from one six-pounder to six, and eaten up with rust; their shot lumps of lead pounded into something like a round shape; and their commanders native Portuguese of the lowest description, without either knowledge or experience".[2] This flotilla departed for Arakan in December and won considerable success, driving the Maghs back into Chittagong. But unfortunately in February 1812 a Burmese force in pursuit of the Maghs crossed the frontier and entered Chittagong; and Canning received instructions to lodge a strong protest. He was about to proceed to the capital when news arrived of a second incursion of Burmese troops into the Company's territory, and since the situation was obviously critical and he feared he might be held a hostage for the good behaviour of the Maghs, he declined, despite the Myowun's earnest requests, to leave for the interior. So far relations with the local officials had been friendly; for example, on the 14th February when a fire broke out which seemed likely to consume the whole town, Canning had sent a party of his followers to assist in suppressing the outbreak, which was fortunately got under. The first fire-engine known in Rangoon was used on this occasion, for the suppression of the fire was largely due to "the timely use of the engine sent as a present by Government to the Heir Apparent". The Myowun expressed his thanks to Canning for his assistance, and as a mark of his esteem placed the quarter of the town in which he was residing under his orders in case of fire.[3] But now relations became decidedly strained; both officials and townsfolk were suspicious and alarmed, and Canning, fearing for the safety of the English residents, made arrangements that on an agreed signal they should come aboard his ship, the *Amboyna*. The signal was given in April. The Myowun made an attempt to seize Canning by force; but though Canning escaped to his ship, the unexpected arrival of another Company's vessel which came up the River without permission and without waiting for a pilot, threw the populace into an uproar as they feared that this was the preliminary to an attack on the town. The English residents managed to get away safely, but among them was the Baptist missionary Carey, who brought with him his wife, his mother-in-law, and his sister-in-law. These three women were all Burmese subjects, and their departure from the town was a breach of the law regarding the export of females. Yet motives of humanity forbade Canning to refuse them refuge,

[1] See Plate No. 6 — *View on a Lake near Rangoon*, showing the bungalow given to Mrs. Canning, the Shwe Dagon in the distance.

[2] *Bengal Political Consultations* 26th December, 1811, No. 6, 21st February, 1812.

[3] *Bengal Political Consultations* 26th March, 1812, No. 1.

lest they suffer a vicarious persecution in place of Carey. Moreover, he was informed, the law in this particular had often been disregarded. The Myowun, fearing that further of the Company's ships might arrive, had batteries thrown up along the lower reaches of the River and at various places round the stockade, and also had masonry gateways erected instead of the old wooden gateways. For these purposes he gave orders that all tombs, of whatever race or religion, should be demolished and their bricks used in the new defences. For three days the townsfolk laboured, even children being called in to carry bricks, until every tomb in the place had been destroyed. Among the tombs thus demolished were those in the English cemetery, which "contained the remains of several respectable Europeans with handsome monuments and tombstones", including the tomb of the missionary Brain and that of Richard Thomas Burney, half-brother of the novelist Fanny Burney, who had died while on a visit to Rangoon in 1808. An acrimonious correspondence took place between Canning and the Myowun on the subject of the destruction of these tombs and also on the subject of Carey's family, until an outbreak of actual fighting seemed the certain outcome. Neither party wished to proceed to extremities, however, and after nearly two months of strain, during which Canning never went ashore without a detachment of troops, an agreement was arrived at. Carey returned to the mission-house with his family, as he desired to do, being confident of his ability to keep on good terms with the Myowun, and at the same time the Myowun gave an undertaking in writing that Carey and his family should not be in any way ill-treated. So the matter was settled to everyone's relief. Canning took advantage of this episode to address the Company's government with the proposal that the whole question of the emigration of the children of Europeans be taken up with the Burmese Court; but the Governor-General in Council felt that interference was not possible in so essentially a domestic matter of the Burmese Government. Canning also protested strongly against the desecration of the English cemetery, but the Myowun declared that it had not been done by his order and that in any case the tombs of all races had been treated alike. Canning admitted that there had been no discrimination but asserted that the Myowun had in fact authorised the proceeding. Carey, however, stated that the desecration was due to the populace who had vented their fury in this manner, and he praised the Myowun for the restraint which he had shown throughout the affair, holding that with almost any other Burmese official war would certainly have broken out.

But while relations in Rangoon became easier, and Canning was able, along with other Europeans, to resume residence ashore, though he stayed at a house by the River and not within the Fort, the Royal Court was still demanding that he should be sent to the capital. The Myowun, alarmed for his own head, begged Canning to excuse himself on the ground of sickness and to send an officer with presents in his place. After some

argument Canning sent his assistant-interpreter with presents, and gave a letter to the Myowun stating that he was unable to proceed to the capital on account of the sickness of many of his followers. Yet a further order for his attendance at Court arrived, and the Myowun, finding that Canning was about to return to Bengal, again begged him to feign sickness, and suggested further that Canning should agree to a few shots being fired at his ship as he departed, so that the Myowun might claim to have endeavoured to detain him by force. Canning, however, dissuaded him on the ground that the Company's Government would take such an action as if it had been meant seriously and not in a friendly spirit. Yet again orders came from Amarapura for Canning's attendance, authorising him to be brought "by force, and well secured, if necessary"; but force could clearly not be used against two well-armed vessels, and the very officials who had brought the orders paid a friendly visit to the ship *Malabar* and expressed themselves much interested in her equipment. So on the 8th October Canning took a friendly farewell of the Myowun; but before he actually sailed for Calcutta the Myowun was replaced by another officer who issued orders that the mission was on no account to leave the port. Canning, however, sailed on the 16th, and no attempt was made to stop him, beyond some reluctance to allow him pilots.

When the King heard of Canning's departure he was greatly enraged, and ordered the Myowun to be crucified on a raft which was to be set adrift at the mouth of the River so that it might float to Bengal to show the Governor-General what happened to those who disobeyed the royal command; but Rogers, the Akaukwun, appeased his wrath by producing some valuable presents, and the Myowun suffered no punishment beyond that of being reduced to the less important province of Dalla.

No further missions to Burma followed Canning's third embassy, and relations between the two Governments became steadily worse, until war was the culmination in 1824.

In 1813 trade received some impetus from the announcement of a considerable reduction in port-dues at Rangoon; many vessels forthwith proceeded to the port, but as soon as trade showed signs of flourishing again the old dues were reimposed with an addition of two per cent; even ships which had already left the port were declared liable for the increased charge, and security was taken for its payment from the merchants who had shipped goods.

In March 1814 occurred another disastrous fire which almost wiped out the whole town. The Baptist missionaries, who had gone to reside at the house of the Akaukwun Rogers within the stockade for fear of the robbers who infested the suburbs, related that "Today, as usual, we came out to the mission-house, that we might enjoy the Sabbath in a more quiet way. We had but just arrived, when one of the servants informed us that there was a fire near the town. We hastened to the place whence the fire proceeded,

and beheld several houses in flames, in a range which led directly to the city; and as we saw no exertions to extinguish it, we concluded the whole place would be destroyed. We set off immediately for our house in town, that we might remove our furniture and things that were there; but when we came to the town gate, it was shut. The poor people, in their fright, had shut the gate, ignorantly imagining they could shut the fire out, though the walls and gates were made entirely of wood. After waiting, however, for some time, the gate was opened, and we removed in safety all our things into the mission house. The fire continued to rage, all day, and swept away almost all the houses, walls, gates, etc." [1]

At this period there was a severe outbreak of cholera[2] in the town. In the hot weather of 1818 its "dreadful ravages made in Rangoon filled every-one with terror and alarm. It was in the midst of the hottest season of the year, and there was no prospect of the disorder's subsiding, until the commencement of the rains. The beating of the death drum, and other instruments used at funerals, sounded all day long, a melancholy dirge in our ears". An attempt was made to expel the evil spirits which brought the disease by "making a tremendous noise......The signal for commencement was given at the court-house, by firing cannons; when immediately every Burman in town began beating on his house, with clubs, or any thing that would make a noise. No one ventured to remain inactive, as it had previously been asserted, that the evil spirits would enter the houses of those who made no noise. This was continued for three successive nights; but notwithstanding the unheard-of uproar, the evil spirits refused to move, and the disorder continued to rage for months afterwards".[3]

Nor was the political situation any more pleasant than the sanitary condition of the town. In June 1819 there was great alarm when news was received of the death of the King Bodawpaya; it was feared that there would be a contest for the throne which would throw the whole country into confusion; but his grandson, Bagyidaw, who had been declared Einshemin on the death of his father in 1808, succeeded to the throne without any serious opposition. Until definite news reached Rangoon of the peaceful accession of the new King, there was much concern in the town, which was "in the utmost anxiety and alarm". It was stated that "the whole place is sitting in sullen silence, expecting an explosion"[4]. But though this fear was ungrounded, there were other political circumstances which gave cause for alarm. Relations between the Burmese Government and the Government of India were

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[1] A. H. Judson, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

[2] Mrs. Judson states that "this disorder had never been known in the Empire before" (p. 116); but this statement is erroneous, for *Sangermano*, p. 134, mentions cholera as a common complaint in Rangoon.

[3] A. H. Judson, *op. cit.*, p. 116-7.

[4] *ibid.* p. 171-5.

strained and rumours were current that an attempt would be made by the British to invade and annex Burma; so grave was the situation that at some periods shipping between Rangoon and the Indian presidencies was almost at a standstill, and it was clear that an outbreak of hostilities was sooner or later inevitable[1].

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[1] *ibid.* p. 118.

CHAPTER SIX

THE WAR OF 1824.

IN 1824 war broke out between Burma and the East India Company, mainly as a result of the troubles on the Arakan frontier. The Company's government resolved upon an invasion of the Irrawaddy valley through Rangoon, among other military measures, and a combined force of nearly eleven thousand men with forty pieces of artillery, drawn from the Madras and Bengal armies, under the command of Sir Archibald Campbell, was assembled at the Andamans[1]. On the afternoon of the 9th May the transports carrying this force, escorted by H.M.S. *Liffey*, H.M.S. *Larne* (commanded by Captain Marryat, the novelist), H. M. S. *Sophia*, the *Slaney* sloop, and several Company's cruisers, besides twenty gun-brigs and about as many row-boats each armed with an eighteen-pounder gun, appeared off the mouth of the Rangoon River; one unit of the fleet was the sixty horse-power steamship *Diana*, the first steam-vessel, so far as is known, ever to visit Rangoon. On the morning of the 10th the fleet stood into the River and anchored within the bar; but then a delay of twenty-four hours ensued, though it is difficult to see the necessity, and it was not till the 11th that the fleet, piloted by Captain May Flower Crisp, who had for some years commanded a merchant-vessel trading to Rangoon, and with the *Larne* and *Liffey* leading, moved up the River on the morning tide. As it passed the Mibya watchpost, a two-gun battery opened fire, but was unable to maintain itself against the cannonade of the warships; a few other batteries were also

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[1] *Bengal Division* — Colonel McCreagh.

H. M. 13th Regt.,	727 ranks	
H. M. 38th Regt.,	1085	
40th Bengal N. I.,	86	
European Artillery	360	
		2208
Madras Troops — Colonel MacLean.		
1st Division		
H. M. 41st Regt.,	762	
Madras European Regt.,	863	
1st Battalion Pioneers,	552	
3rd Madras N. I.,	676	
7th M. N. I.,	695	
8th M. N. I.,	652	
9th M. N. I.,	658	
10th M. N. I.,	609	
17th M. N. I.,	617	
22nd M. N. I.,	711	
		6795
Madras Foot Artillery,		560
H. M. 89th Regt.,		1012
Bombay Foot Artillery,		69
		10,644

silenced as the fleet advanced, and by the early afternoon the expedition was anchored off the town. The only contretemps that occurred during the progress up the River was the grounding of the *Larne*, but she was soon got off.

The first impression which the town made on the invaders was not very pleasing. It by no means came up to the expectations which had been formed. "We had been so much accustomed to hear Rangoon spoken of as a place of great trade and commercial importance, that we could not fail to feel disappointed at its mean, poor appearance", wrote one member of the force.[1] "We had talked of its custom-house, its dockyards, and its harbour, until our imaginations had led us to anticipate, if not splendour, at least some visible signs of a flourishing commercial city; but, however humble our expectations might have been, they must have fallen short of the miserable and desolate picture which the place presented. The custom-house, the principal building in the place, seemed fast tottering into ruins. One solitary hull upon the stocks marked the dockyard, and a few country vessels and country canoes were the only craft found in this great commercial mart". Similarly another observer notes, "To eyes accustomed only to the grandeur and regularity of European cities, it naturally presented an assemblage of fragile bamboo tenements, and nothing more".[2]

The arrival of the expedition at the River mouth had taken Rangoon by surprise. Neither Burmese nor British had expected this event. The first warning had been received by means of beacons, which had been lit at the Mibya guard-post when the fleet first appeared on the 9th evening, and which could be seen from the fleet that night passing the news up the River. At the time the European residents, some of whom complained strongly afterwards that the Company's Government should have given them warning of the approaching attack, were nearly all "at a festive meeting" at a garden in the suburbs, and they were promptly arrested and put in irons. The Burmese officials, however, quickly came to the conclusion that the town could not be held against the enemy, for the stockade was in a poor state of repair, and very few troops were available. "This defence", wrote an observer a few months before, "is now in a very dilapidated state, unfit to keep out a few drunken sailors, much less a disciplined army, excepting that part of the town facing the river. Peons, or followers of members of Government, are the only persons that have the semblance of soldiers for defence, and of these there are about 1,000 men without discipline, and among whom perhaps 100 good muskets may be seen."[3] Under these circumstances, realising the impossibility of maintaining a defence of the town, the local officials, with the object of causing as much embarrassment as possible to the invading force, had, as soon as the news of the approach of the force was received, issued orders that all the inhabitants were to vacate

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[1] Snodgrass, *op. cit.*, pp. 12, 15.
[2] Doveton, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
[3] *Home Miscellaneous*, 662/97 sqq., — statement by M. F. Crisp.



Marryat, Thornton & Moore: Illustrations of the Burmese War.

VIEW OF THE LANDING AT RANGOON, 1824

the place and withdraw to the jungle. Such defence as was put up was intended only to delay the enemy's landing until the town was completely deserted. Thus the fleet was met with nothing more than a few shots from the battery at the King's Wharf. The *Liffey* anchored close to the Wharf, the transports in her rear, and the battery, which could not be held against the *Liffey's* guns, soon ceased firing. Immediately after the first shots had been exchanged, a boat came off from the shore bearing Mr. Hough, of the American Baptist Mission, with a message from the Yewun threatening the instant execution of the European prisoners if the firing did not cease: but the firing nevertheless continued until the battery was silenced. Three detachments were then landed from the transports, one above the town, one below, and one at the Wharf, and within twenty minutes of the *Liffey's* arrival the town had been taken.[1] The same evening Maingthu was occupied with even less resistance, this step being essential as the *Larne* had gone aground again, this time off the Dalla shore. The European prisoners had been kept in the Custom House, and their execution was under consideration when a 32 lb. shot from the *Liffey* passed through the building; the guard withdrew taking seven of their prisoners with them and leaving the rest behind to be released by the landing-party. The seven who were taken away were found next day by a patrol from the invading force, still in irons, near the Pagoda.[2]

The main body of the force did not land till the morning of the 12th, the town being guarded by the three detachments over night. A certain amount of looting took place during the evening, though there was a good deal of disappointment at the absence of valuables. However, plenty of tobacco was found, and, of less utility, bales of cotton cloth; but above all, the first troops to enter the town found a store of brandy in the cellar of a merchant's house, and by nightfall the greater part of the European troops were intoxicated, and went roaming the town bearing lighted torches, with the result that fires broke out. Some of the officers then intervened and poured the rest of the spirit away, and sailors from the ships were sent ashore and managed to check the flames, though not till nearly half the town had been destroyed. If the Burmese had made an attack that night, few of the troops ashore would have been in a condition to offer any show of resistance.

When the remainder of the expedition landed next day they won no booty except poultry and a certain amount of cloth. The inhabitants had removed most of their property and little was to be found beyond the ancient weapons in the government arsenal.

The invading force was distributed in the town and along the two roads leading to the Pagoda; the kyaungs around the Sule Pagoda, along the road-

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[1] See Plate No. 8 — *View of the Landing.*

[2] The following is the official list of the prisoners found in the town: J. Snowball, J. Turner, William Roy, R. Wyatt, G. H. Roy (country-born), Arratoon (Armenian), R. J. Trill, Alexander Tench, H. W. Thompson, J. Wade (American Baptist Mission), P. Aide (Greek).

sides, and on the Pagoda platform, being used as barracks.[1] The artillery was stationed on the Pagoda Hill, which formed the key to the whole position; and detachments were also posted at Pazundaung and at the Theinbyu, commonly called "the White House Stockade." Parties of seamen were sent along the River to seek out and destroy any armed boats or fire-rafts which might be met.

The deserted state of the town was highly disappointing to the invaders. "We were placed in the singular predicament of capturing a town which a day or two before had contained several thousand inhabitants, but of whom not one single individual remained on our taking possession of it".[2] It was considered in the army that the unnecessary delay of twenty-four hours at the River mouth was responsible for this state of affairs; if the force had ascended the River without waste of time, the whole or greater part of the population would still have been in the town; but as it was, "we found the whole town stripped, and not a vestige of anything was to be found".[3] And not only was Rangoon deserted and swept clean of supplies, but, more serious still, the surrounding country also had been almost completely cleared of food and cattle, and the River had been cleared of boats. "Deserted as we found ourselves, by the people of the country, from whom alone we could expect supplies, unprovided with the means of moving either by land or water, and the rainy monsoon just setting in—no prospect remained to us but that of a long residence in the miserable and dirty hovels of Rangoon, trusting to the transports for provisions, with such partial supplies as our foraging parties might procure, from time to time, by distant and fatiguing marches into the interior of the country. In the neighbourhood of Rangoon itself, nothing beyond some paddy, or rice in the husk, was found; the careful policy of the Burmese authorities had removed beyond our reach everything that was likely to be of use to an invading army".[4] It had been confidently expected that, in view of the supposedly wealthy and fertile nature of the district, bountiful supplies would be available; and further, it had been anticipated that the Mons would immediately rise in support of the invading force and provide boats and draught-cattle. Therefore no provision had been made for land or water transport or for supplies of food. Now it was found that the supplies, whether of food or of transport, had been removed, than which, it was justly observed, "no measure was better adapted for paralysing all our efforts"[5], and also that the Mons had not the slightest inclination to rebel. Proclamations promising protection and urging the inhabitants to return to Rangoon were circulated among the neighbouring villages; but since most of the people of the villages had been removed along

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[1] See Plate No. 9 — *View from Major Canning's Residence.* Canning lived first in a tent and later in a hut in the precincts of this pagoda.

[2] Trant, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

[3] Butler, *Services of the Madras European Regim*

[4] Snodgrass, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

[5] Doveton, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

with the inhabitants of Rangoon, these had little effect. Moreover, even those Mons who were aware of the proclamations remained unimpressed, not unnaturally preferring to wait to see which side was going to be victorious before committing themselves. In consequence, there was no food and there was no transport. The district had been almost swept bare of cattle, and though the neighbouring creeks were scoured for boats, hardly any could be obtained; nor, if boats had been found, were there the men to work them. This proved disastrous for the invaders. The army found itself dependent on Bengal and Madras for supplies; but no precautions had been taken there against such an emergency, and in any case it took four months for a ship sent from Rangoon to return to the port with supplies. With neither transport nor food, the expedition, which, moreover, had been unwisely despatched at the beginning of the rainy season, found itself marooned in Rangoon, unable to advance, half starved, and, to a considerable extent, besieged by the Burmese. It was nine months before the situation had changed sufficiently to enable the force to advance into the interior.

Meanwhile the conditions which the invading force had to endure were unpleasant in the extreme. There was no bazaar, and all food had to be obtained from the commissariat, which had brought little store of rations; and what had been brought was old and bad. It would appear that in the expectation that the supplies would not in fact be called into use, a good deal of malpractice had taken place on the part of the contractors and the commissariat department. Salt-beef, salt-pork, and weevily biscuit, formed the daily fare, plus pineapples from the gardens and jungles, over indulgence in which produced a good deal of sickness. When "hard beef and rancid pork" began to give out, salt fish was supplied, but was sometimes so bad as to be uneatable. The supply of bad biscuits became exhausted and had to be replaced by rice. There was no cocoa, no coffee, no sugar, no bread. "Salt meat boiled, salt meat fried, salt meat curried" were the normal diet; plus paddy-bird curry, made with the dhall which the commissariat served out.[1] But even paddy-bird curry was difficult to obtain, for shooting game within the lines was prohibited and could be indulged in only surreptitiously; and on one occasion, when, after several days of foraging, some four thousand cattle had been collected, the General ordered them to be set free, as they were private property and he did not wish to alienate the Mons.[2]

Such food as could be purchased privately was at a premium. Some of the transport captains were in a position to sell food, but at enormous profit. "Bullocks were very seldom to be obtained for any money; fresh provisions of every kind were almost equally scarce; so much so, that a pound of mutton sometimes sold for five shillings, a duck for eighteen, a fowl for twenty, a pound of soft bread for two, butter for four, cheese for five, tea for twenty, a basket of potatoes (weighing about 130 lb) for twenty, and a bottle of wine

[1] Doveton, *op. cit.*, p. 93 sqq.
[2] Butler, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

or spirits for ten shillings. Six months elapsed before any vegetables whatever could be procured. Animals for draught were equally inaccessible, and when a few ponies were captured they fetched nearly 100l. sterling per head".[1] Those junior officers who could not afford to purchase such supplies were driven to the expedient of cadging meals off the captains of the transports.

Under such conditions, together with the rains, sickness broke out inevitably. Fevers, and "rheumatic ailments, acute dysentery, and obstinate and wasting diarrhoea" became common,[2] and in July scurvy also afflicted the troops. Both Indian and European troops suffered equally, the former from lack of vegetables, the latter from lack of meat. By the end of July Rangoon "was one vast hospital, the best part of the force, including camp-followers, being under the influence of fever; and it was as gloomy a scene as could well be conceived. Scurvy and dysentery were the most destructive disorders, and these soon filled our hospitals to overflowing".[3] The total want of fresh meat, fish, milk, bread, and vegetables, made it impossible to provide proper diet in the hospitals, where, in addition, there was a shortage of medicines.

From June to October the average monthly admissions to hospital from the artillery alone numbered 127, being over a quarter of the total strength, and this is said to be below the average of other units; in November, of the five thousand European troops, scarcely thirteen hundred were fit for duty; and in the first eleven months that the expedition was in Burma nearly half the European troops died[4].

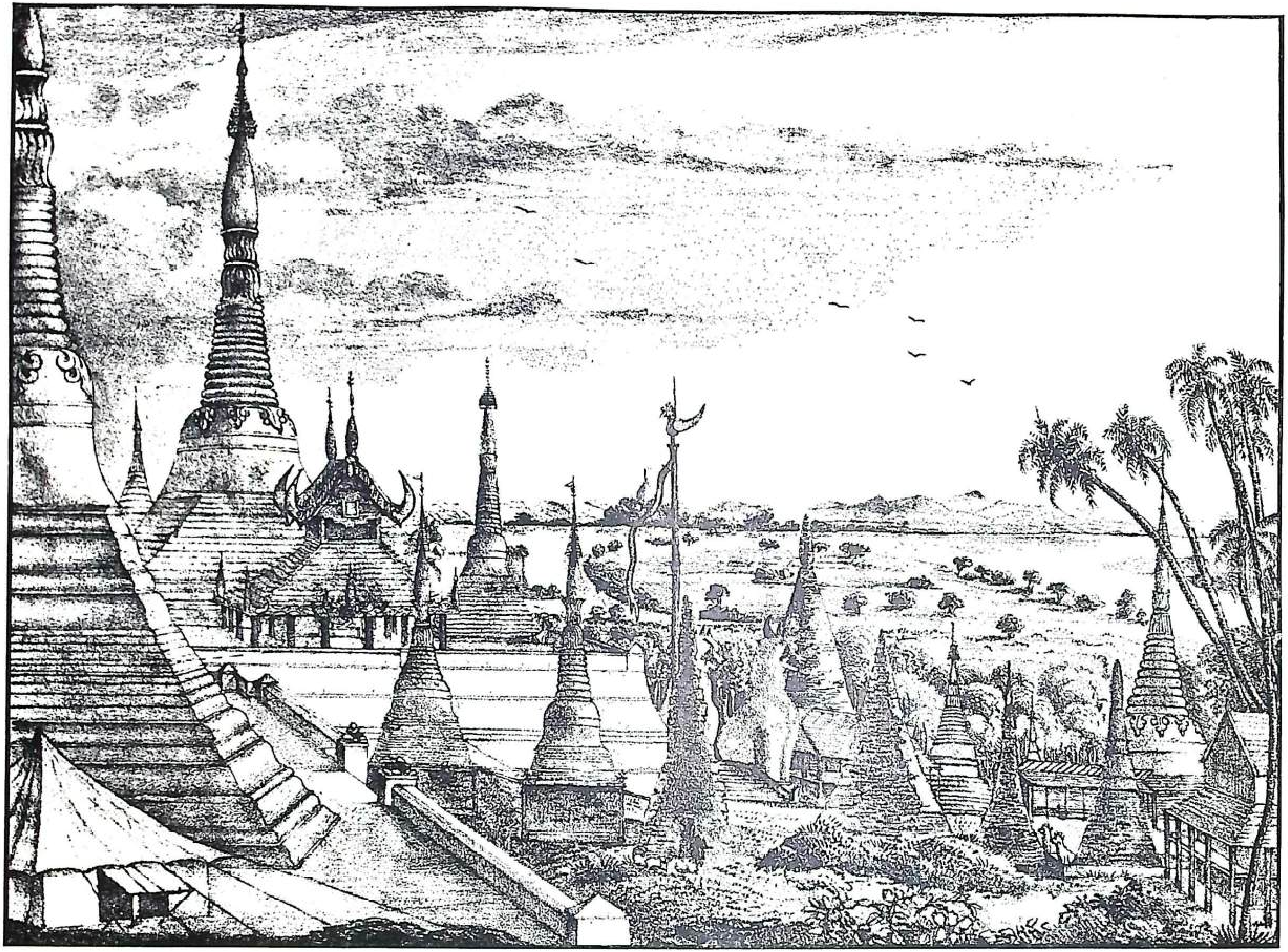
In August a bakehouse was established and bread became available, but only in sufficient quantity to meet the needs of the sick. The transport captains, however, sent their boats down the River to catch fish, and this was some relief. The situation, disastrous though it was for the invading army, proved beneficial to the more enterprising traders; thus the shortage of beer was turned to good account by one of them who, learning of the approach of a ship with a supply, went down the River to meet it and established a "corner" in beer, purchasing nearly the whole stock at the rate of Rs. 8 per dozen bottles and Rs. 90 per cask. Having brought it ashore, he sold it at Rs. 1-8 a bottle and Rs. 1-4 a can, making a total profit of Rs. 10,000[5].

Not till towards the end of the year did the situation improve appreciably. The cessation of the rains helped to reduce the amount of sickness, and better still, Chinese traders began to arrive from Penang with bread, tea, sugar, pigs, poultry, vegetables, in abundance, which they sold at a vast profit.

It is evident that the enterprise had been undertaken in an altogether too light-hearted spirit by those responsible. The greatest soldier of the time

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[1] Marshall, *Narrative of the Naval Operations in Ava*, p. 127.
[2] Havelock, *op. cit.*, p. 87 sqq.
[3] Doveton, *op. cit.*, p. 111.
[4] Wilson, *Documents Illustrative of the Burmese War*, p. 262, 286.
[5] Symns, *A Merchant Pioneer*.



Grierson: Twelve Select Views of the Seat of War.

VIEW FROM MAJOR CANNING'S RESIDENCE, 1824

seems to have regarded the affair as trivial. When asked who should be given the command, the Duke of Wellington suggested Lord Combermere. "But we have always understood that your Grace thought Lord Combermere a fool". "So he is a fool, and a damned fool, but he can take Rangoon".[1] However Sir Archibald Campbell was sent instead.

Naturally for the whole of the rains of 1824 little of a military nature could be achieved by the invaders. Apart from casualties due to sickness, their army was immobilised for lack of transport; if a gun was needed in an expedition outside the lines it had to be moved by manual labour. Under such conditions, military operations were trivial, and were restricted to little more than such measures as were needed to secure the hold on the town. The Burmese on the other hand, having been reinforced by ten thousand men sent from Upper Burma as soon as news of the invasion was received at Court[2], were active throughout the rains; stockades sprang up "like mushrooms" in the neighbourhood, it was said, as at Kemmendine, Kamayut, and Kokine, and formed a serious danger to foraging parties; while towards the end of May the Burmese forces gradually closed in on the invaders' lines, advancing through the jungle and sometimes entrenching themselves within a few hundred yards of the Pagoda, firing on the picquets, cutting off stragglers, and creeping up to the sentries at night and cutting them down. Although a formal assault towards the end of May proved abortive, these effectively harassing tactics which the Burmese army adopted had a bad effect on the morale of the invading force, and in the hope of bringing about battle in which the Burmese might be finally disposed of, a number of attacks were made on their positions. Moreover, so little information was available about the strength of the Burmese forces in the neighbourhood, that the commander of the invading force hoped, by means of such expeditions, to obtain accurate intelligence.

An offer on the part of the Burmese command to treat having been rejected by General Campbell, who doubted the authority of the commander to negotiate and also suspected some ulterior motive, an advance was made from Rangoon on the 28th May towards the north, and three unfinished and undefended stockades were occupied. Two guns accompanied this expedition, but the artillerymen, who had to manhandle their guns, became thoroughly exhausted and had to be sent back to Rangoon under the escort of about one-third of the force. The remainder continued their way "through rice fields, some inches under water, and in a heavy fall of rain", and after "a most fatiguing march of eight or ten miles"[3] reached Gyogon, where two more stockades had been erected. These were taken with some loss, but the Burmese defenders, pursuing tactics which were exactly suited to their circumstances, withdrew into the jungle and could not be brought to pitched battle. The

[1] G. W. E. Russell, *Collections and Recollections.*

[2] *Konbaungset* II. 881.

[3] Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

expedition returned to Rangoon, and the following day another force was sent out which found the stockades deserted and similarly failed to engage the Burmese. On the 30th a stockade in the jungle not far from the Shwe Dagon was taken, and on the same day a detachment was sent to Syriam, but the old Portuguese fort there "built upon an eligible and commanding height (was) so completely overgrown with trees and brushwood, as to be scarcely perceptible from the river"[1] and no Burmese force was met.

The strongest Burmese position at this time was Kemmendine, where several stockades had been erected. On the 3rd of June a detachment marched westwards from the Shwe Dagon upon these stockades, while another force went by boat up the River. The River force landed and burnt the village, but part of the land force, being mistaken for Burmese, was bombarded from the boats and after that could not be induced to attack, and the remainder failed when it did attack. On the 10th June the attack was renewed on a bigger scale, and the stockades were occupied on the 11th. Thereafter the post at Kemmendine was garrisoned by the invaders.

In this same month, June, news was received in Rangoon that the Dalla Myowun had come down with orders from the King to block up the River at the bar off Monkey Point so as to cut the invaders' communications with Bengal; but nothing came of this effort. It was observed at the time that "had his Majesty issued these orders previous to our arrival and his Engineers known how to set about the execution of them by blocking up the narrow channels off Monkey and King's Point 3 miles below the Town, difficulty might have been experienced in our progress up, which must have been carried on through a jungle previously deemed impenetrable or by a circuitous navigation up the Pegue River and Pujjoondaung Creek inland to the great Pagoda and from thence by land to Rangoon which, properly defended, might have given some trouble"[2].

During the rest of June little fighting occurred while the Burmese were gathering in strength for a further assault on Rangoon. A change was made in the Burmese command, the Wungyi Thadomingyimaha and the Yamawaddy Min replacing the Wungyi Thadominkaung and Thadomahathinapati. The new generals made their headquarters at Kamayut, from whence they attempted an encircling movement, reinforced by fire-rafts which were floated down the River against the shipping; these drifted ashore before any damage was done, and thereafter the naval commander anchored beams in the River to intercept any further attempts. On the morning of the 1st July the assault began. The main body of the attacking force advanced through the jungle between the Shwe Dagon and Kemmendine while others advanced to the east of the Pagoda and yet another detachment attacked Maingthu.

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[1] Snodgrass, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

[2] *Home Miscellaneous*, letter from Major Canning, dated 19th June, 1824.

These attacks were repelled by the invading army, but Maingthu and the hamlet of Pazundaung were both burnt.

In the hope of stopping the harassing tactics which were now resumed, by driving the Burmese forces to a greater distance from the defences of Rangoon, the commander of the invading army moved a detachment up the River by boat on the 8th July and destroyed a post at Pagoda Point, where the Hlaing and Panhlaing Rivers meet; while on the same day another body of troops took the stockades which had been erected at Kamayut, but only after a stout resistance by the Burmese, in which Thadomingyi lost his life.

Information being received that the Burmese were concentrating at Kyaikkalo, beyond Mingaladon, a force was sent from Rangoon on the 19th July, part advancing by land and part up the Pazundaung Creek by boat; but the land column failed to reach Kyaikkalo, while the river force, unable to effect a junction with the land column, returned to Rangoon. It had been hoped to release various of the former inhabitants of Rangoon who were said to be detained in the villages along the Creek, but very few could be found.

In August the Mon thugyi of Syriam, Maung Sat, was creating difficulties for the invaders by cutting off parties which went down the River to catch fish, much needed for the hospitals. He had occupied the old fort where he had cleared the brushwood and had mounted guns. Guns had also been mounted at the Syriam Pagoda. On the 4th August a small detachment was sent from Rangoon and took both the fort and the Pagoda, but made no attempt to hold them.

At about the same time some Burmans from Dalla province reported that there were many there who were anxious to return to Rangoon and would do so if a guard were sent to escort them. They stated that there were no Burmese troops in the neighbourhood. This was news which the invading force had been anxiously awaiting, and on the 8th of the month a detachment went up the Dalla Creek in boats; but it came upon two stockades, and though these were occupied with some loss, it was obvious that the information which had occasioned the expedition was false, and the force withdrew.

Meanwhile the sporadic attacks upon picquets continued, and on two occasions in August small bodies of Burmese troops made attempts to rush the north entrance of the Pagoda, though without success. The Burmese continued in force, also, in the Dalla district along the Creek and at Pagoda Point; they even tried to capture three of the gun-brigs, but were driven off with the loss of five boats. Fishing parties were still occasionally taken prisoner.

Towards the end of September the invading army sent out a detachment which took and destroyed a stockade at Panhlaing.

In October a second advance was made on Kyaikkalo, with disastrous results. After taking a stockade at Tadagyi, north of Tadagale, the

expedition failed completely at Kyaikkalo and the retreat which ensued ended in a rout; but night falling, the Burmese were unable to follow up their victory. To restore confidence an expedition was sent against Tantabin, up the Hlaing River, and the stockade there was carried on the 7th of the month; and on the 11th a renewed attack on Kyaikkalo was successful.

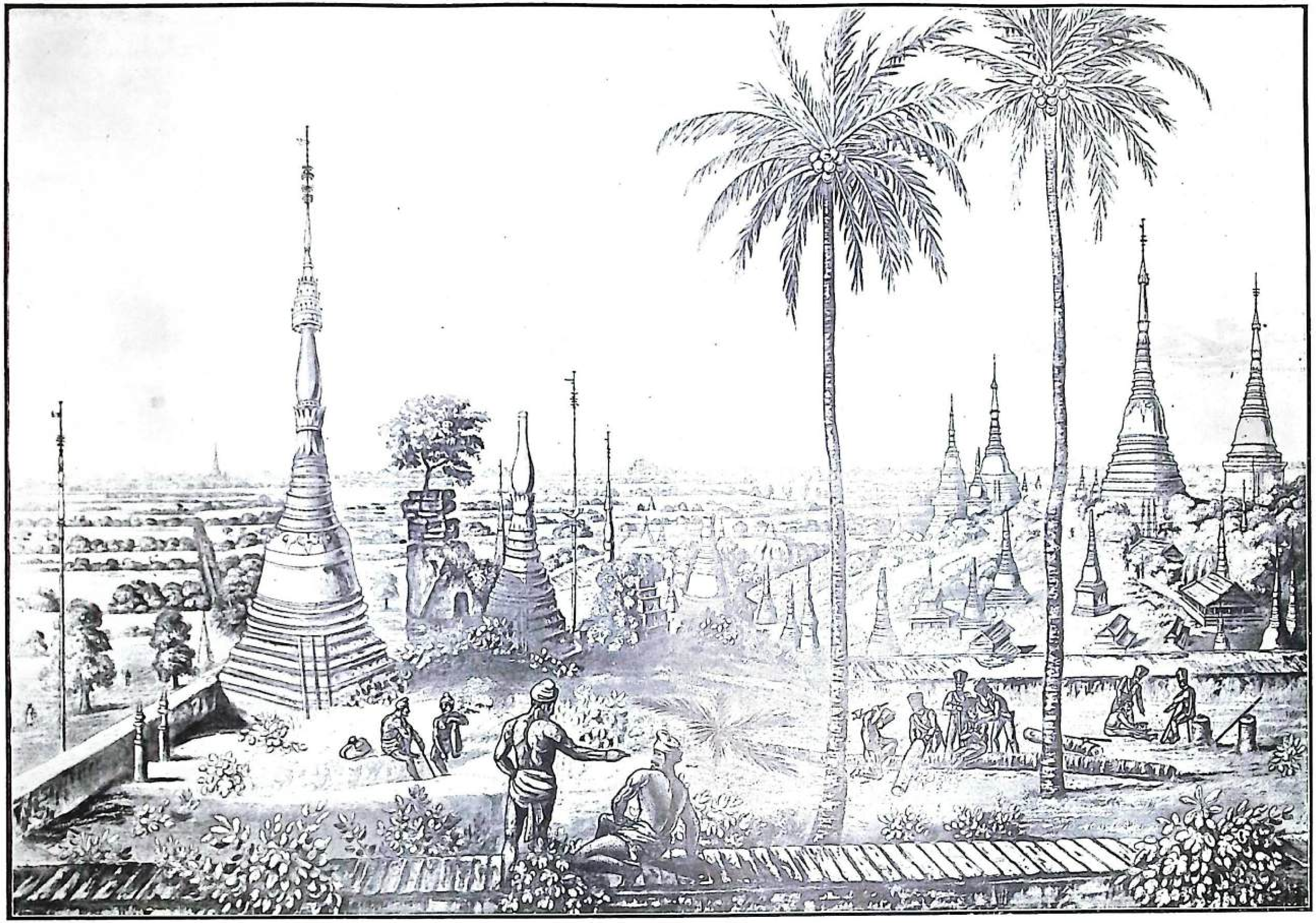
In all these numerous operations, the efforts of the invading army had been, except in the case of Kemmendine, limited to attempts to take and destroy stockades without endeavouring to hold the ground so won. The troops then returned to Rangoon, leaving the Burmese to reoccupy their posts, and so able to renew their harassing tactics without difficulty. On the other hand, the difficulties of communication during the rains no doubt made it dangerous to distribute the invading force among outlying posts scattered over a large area of country.

In November the great Burmese general, Maha Bandula, arrived in the neighbourhood of Rangoon to make an assault on the invaders' position with fifty thousand men.[1] He made his headquarters at Kyaikkalo. On the 1st December he began to invest the defending lines from Kemmendine to Pazundaung, and at Maingthu beyond the River. The invaders' army was not adequate to the defence of the whole front, and Maingthu was therefore evacuated. Kemmendine was attacked on the 1st, but, aided by the naval force on the River, the garrison was able to repel the attack, despite the sending down of fire-rafts against the boats. On the evening of the same day a Burmese advance on the north-east of the Pagoda was checked, and the next morning a party was dislodged from a commanding position which it had taken up in front of the north entrance of the Pagoda. Firing along the whole front, unaccompanied by an advance on either side, continued for the next two or three days, while the Burmese pushed their entrenchments forward on the north and east; on the north their position was within musket shot of the Pagoda, from which it was separated only by the Scotch Tank, while on the east their trenches came close to the Theinbyu; and from Maingthu they maintained a steady cannonade on the shipping. On the 5th the defenders sent a flotilla up the Pazundaung Creek which bombarded the Burmese on their flank, while at the same time a sally was made against their entrenchments near the Theinbyu. The Burmese here were hampered by the swampy nature of the ground, which forced them to move over restricted areas so that they could not escape the gunfire from the ships. Thus they were forced to retire, and Maha Bandula then abandoned his position on the east of the town and concentrated on the north, until on the 7th the defending army made a grand advance which carried the entrenchments and forced Bandula to withdraw to stockades which he had erected at Kokine, about four miles north of the Pagoda[2]. On the same day Maingthu was again lost by the Burmese.

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[1] So General Campbell, report dated 9th December, 1824; but the *Konbaungset Yazawin* II 890, gives the more probable figure of 16,000.

[2] *Konbaungset* II 391 says that the Burmese withdrew to Kanbe and Tamwe.



Marryat, Thornton and Moore: Illustrations of the Burmese War.

SCENE FROM THE UPPER TERRACE OF THE GREAT PAGODA TO THE SOUTH EAST, 1824.

So far the town had been almost devoid of its proper inhabitants. In August there had been only two hundred of them in the place, and these were nearly all employees and servants of the European merchants; gradually the pongyis had begun to come back to their kyaungs: but otherwise the former inhabitants had kept at a distance. Now, however, a number of them, including a good many deserters from the Burmese army, began to arrive, and all who were unarmed were admitted. But some of these were deserters in appearance only, and had been sent by their commanders for a definite purpose. "Spies, assassins, and incendiaries lurked in every quarter of Rangoon" it was afterwards said[1], and the effect of their presence was shown on the night of the 14th December, when fires broke out in several parts of the town, while at the same time fire-rafts came down the River against the ships. The fires in the town had been carefully started on the windward side, and, the wind being high, nothing could prevent their spreading; in a couple of hours half the town had been burnt out. But then the wind dropped and the fire was got under. No harm resulted to military stores, but great damage was done to private property. Curiously enough, no attempt was made by the Burmese general to take advantage of the confusion by attacking the town.

On the 15th the Burmese army was driven from its stronghold at Kokine,[2] and that was the end of the fighting around Rangoon except that in February a stockade was destroyed at Tantabin. The Burmese army retreated northwards and left the Delta to the invaders. As a consequence of this victory, the Mons were now willing to procure and man boats for the transport of troops and supplies; moreover, encouraged by a further proclamation by General Campbell, the Mons throughout the Delta rose in revolt, and those who were with the Burmese army in many cases deserted, supported in their withdrawal by a detachment sent from the invading army in Rangoon. It thus became possible for the invaders to advance into the interior, and when the necessary transport had been obtained, the army left Rangoon on its advance northwards on the 11th February 1825.

The disaster to the Burmese arms involved in the repulse of the grand attack on Rangoon, the defeat at Kokine, and the consequent retreat, completely altered the character of the war. If the Burmese had adhered to their former Fabian tactics, instead of engaging in pitched battle which brought defeat and rout, it is possible that the invaders would have remained immobilised in Rangoon; but the retreat opened the way northwards to the invaders and also enabled them to secure transport from the people of the Delta, failing which circumstances they could not have advanced. It would appear

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[1] Snodgrass, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

[2] The *Konbaungset* suggests that it was a "bamboo fort at Tamwe" that was the scene of this battle, but other accounts, *e.g. Alexander*, suggest Kanbe as the scene of the conflict.

that the appointment of Bandula, with his energetic policy, to the command of the army at Rangoon, was a major misfortune for the Burmese Government.[1]

The war moved northwards, leaving Rangoon to be simply the base for supply; and when it was realised that the Burmese army was definitely retreating, still more of the former inhabitants returned to their homes in Rangoon. Land was allotted in Tatgale and Pazundaung to any who had none already, and soon the population of the town was comparatively large, though not, it would seem, as much as in the days before the war. The returned inhabitants were in general in a miserable condition, after a rains in the jungle, where many unfortunates had died and most had been sick and nearly starved; and they now found, in many cases, that their houses had been destroyed. But they set to work to rebuild their homes and to resume their normal life. In a few days after the battle at Kokine a bazaar began, at first selling only fish, but later on venison, fowl, and vegetables as well, and ultimately there were two bazaars in the town. But it was some months yet before there was a sufficient supply of food. Cattle for slaughter could be obtained, but owing to the interference of the war with cultivation, the shortage of vegetables continued. Rice, too, not having been sufficiently cultivated during the preceding rains, "had risen to such an enormous price as to render it a luxury attainable only by the wealthy, while the poor of the surrounding country were driven to wild roots and the leaves of trees for the means of supporting life". Grain was brought from India and distributed through the Delta creeks in barges under guard; but even so it was not till the crop of the autumn of 1825 came in that serious want ceased.[2]

The Delta having been occupied, the problem of governing it arose. The expedition had been accompanied to Rangoon in the first place by a Political Commissioner in the person of Major Canning; but he, like many others, had been taken sick, and in August 1824 had returned to Bengal where he soon afterwards died. He was replaced in 1825 by T. C. Robertson of the Bengal Civil Service, who was the junior member of a commission of two, the other member being Sir Archibald Campbell, with R. D. Mangles of the Bengal Civil Service as Secretary. In political matters the military member had the casting vote, but in civil matters Robertson had control though the military member could record his dissent. The secretary's duty was "to conduct the correspondence and methodize the proceedings of the commission, so as to have all prepared for the regular administration of whatever extent of territory the chances of war might throw into our hands".[3] After the arrival of Robertson the commission proceeded to organise the government of the Delta. Military officers were posted as magistrates at

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1 Burmese opinion seems to have come to this conclusion: King Tharrawaddy, successor of King Bagyidaw, later declared that "had Bundoolah followed his advice, which was to take to the jungles and carry on a guerilla warfare instead of meeting in force, the result of the war would have been very different" *(India Secret Consultations*, Vol. 22, para 390).

2 Gouger, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

3 Robertson, *op. cit.*, p. 148 sqq.

Prome, Tharrawa, Bassein, Pegu, Martaban, and Ye, as well as at Rangoon which had had a military governor from the first occupation. Now Major Nicholson of the Bengal Army was appointed as Magistrate of Rangoon in subordination to Brigadier Smelt who commanded the garrison. The new magistrates, however, had to work through the thugyis, and could do little more than endeavour to induce them to maintain some semblance of law and order. The thugyis were given only limited powers of imprisonment, and the proceedings in serious cases were required to be sent to the magistrate. But the system of law and order was not in reality maintained. The inhabitants of the Delta were suffering severely from want, and in many cases were driven to violent crime to obtain the merest necessities of life; their accustomed system of government had broken down completely and it was far from easy to restore it, so that "there was general anarchy in Pegu; crime went undetected, or if detected, unpunished. Murder and gang robbery were of every day occurrence".[1] Even in the suburbs of Rangoon, despite the presence of the garrison, violent crimes occurred. One morning two officers were approached by a man with his face cut in two; he was servant to a Burman who acted as contractor to the commissariat department and through whose hands considerable sums of money passed: "A party of armed ruffians, expecting a rich booty, had broken the evening before into his dwelling, which was situated on the outskirts of the town, murdered him and his wife whilst they were asleep, ransacked his house, and inflicted this dreadful wound on his servant, who was endeavouring to make his escape. No traces of the murderers could be discovered".[2]

So far as Rangoon was concerned, it had, however, from the first been possible for the invaders to exercise some degree of control. It was even possible to take a census of the inhabitants, which showed that there were in August, 1826, 1570 houses and 8,666 people. Records were made of the amounts formerly received in export and import duties, and an attempt was made to establish a regular system for the collection of customs dues. As early as the 2nd June 1824 a proclamation had been issued in the names of Brigadier-General Archibald Campbell, Major J. Canning who was Political Agent, and Captain I. Nichol, stating that " We the undersigned Commissioners on the part of the Supreme British Authority in India, do hereby give notice to the Commanders and Officers of all vessels now in and hereafter resorting to the Rangoon River and to all persons engaged in trade at Rangoon, that, from henceforth they are prohibited from landing goods and stores of any description at all places along the banks of the River, with the exception of the Custom House Wharf, at which place all goods and stores are directed to be landed for the purpose of being examined and passed agreeably to the Custom House regulation hereto annexed, and we further give notice that if any goods are landed or attempted to be landed in future contrary to the directions now

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[1] Gouger, *op. cit.*, p. 307.

[2] Alexander, *Travels from India to England*, p. 47.

given they will be liable to confiscation. Captain I. Nichol is appointed Collector of Customs at Rangoon." The regulations annexed to the proclamation prescribed that all government stores, all mess-stores belonging to officers of the Army, and all provisions, should be duty free; spirits were to pay a duty of Rs. 4 per gallon, wine in casks Re. 1 per gallon, and wine in bottles Rs. 2 per gallon; timber exported was to pay an *ad valorem* duty of 2 per cent; and all other articles, whether imported or exported, were to pay an *ad valorem* duty of 8 per cent. It is possible that the establishment of a customs system is indicative of General Campbell's desire for the permanent establishment of British rule in the Delta; and perhaps equally indicative of the reluctance of the Government of India to accede to this desire is its disallowance of the imposition of duties. However, although duties ceased to be collected, the two commissioners prohibited the importation of all kinds of spirits without express permission.

To facilitate navigation, a pilot-brig was stationed off the mouth of the River; and for the better control of shipping Captain Hornblow, Madras Agent for Transport, was appointed Master-Attendant of the port.

The war was ended by the Treaty of Yandabo, which was concluded on the 24th February 1826; and among the terms of peace was a provision that an indemnity of one crore of rupees should be paid to the Company, on receipt of one quarter of which the invading army would withdraw to Rangoon, which it was to continue to occupy until the second quarter had been paid. The second quarter was not paid until the 8th December 1826, and thus Rangoon remained in enemy occupation until the 9th December. One other provision of the Treaty affected Rangoon, *viz.* that British vessels need not in future unship their guns and rudders when they entered the port, a longstanding grievance being thus removed.

The invading force having enshipped on the 9th December, Lieut. Rawlinson was left behind to receive the remaining instalments of the indemnity and to protect commerce. He was however, merely an agent of the Company's Government, and had no administrative powers; the administration of Rangoon reverted to the Burmese Government. The handing over of the town was not unattended with difficulties. The new Myowun, who had been received at Kemmendine by General Campbell on the 24th November, had wanted to enter the town with six hundred men before the Company's troops left and to share the control of the town with the British administrator, but this suggestion was firmly refused. After that, it was found that the Burmese in the town had been collecting arms, and a house to house search was made, while troops patrolled the streets, and the weapons were discovered. There were many prisoners in the gaol, men who had been convicted of crime by the magistrate, and the Wungyi suggested that all should be released when the garrison departed; but the officer in charge, Gouger, a former merchant who had been given command of the police, refused to undertake the responsi-

bility of releasing a large number of "ferocious characters" and left it to the Myowun to do this when he assumed control.[1]

On the prescribed day the Myowun was received in state in Rangoon by the army of occupation with a salute of nineteen guns, and, the troops having embarked, the Burmese flag, nine by six cubits, red in colour with a peacock in the centre and a yellow circle around, was hoisted on the flagstaff at the Wharf. A salute of three guns accompanied the hoisting of the flag; and the day was celebrated by *pwes*.

The departure of the Company's troops was the signal for a Mon insurrection against the restored Burmese authorities. The Mons, imagining that the Delta would be placed permanently under the government of the Company, had rendered aid to the invading force, and were greatly disappointed at the news of the approaching withdrawal of the garrison. It was true that the Treaty of Yandabo provided for a general amnesty for all who had taken part in the war, but such a provision was not likely to be regarded once the garrison had left,[2] and there was a good deal of feeling among both Mons and English that the Government of India, in concluding the Treaty of Yandabo which placed the Mons at the mercy of those against whom they had fought, had been guilty of an act of betrayal, especially as protection had been explicity promised them. Sir Archibald Campbell in a proclamation issued soon after the Burmese retreat from Rangoon in December 1824 had urged the Mons to place themselves "under the protection of the British flag..... Choose from amongst yourselves a chief, and I will acknowledge him".[3] This proclamation had quite properly been construed as a guarantee of the restoration of Mon independence under the Company's protection, and the assistance which the Mons rendered to the invading force must have been evoked largely by that consideration. It was said that Campbell had indeed hoped to establish the Mon kingdom once more, but that his government did not send its assent to the proposal until after the terms of peace had already been agreed upon at Yandabo. The only saving feature of the situation was that the occupation of Rangoon and the neighbourhood pending the payment of the second instalment of the indemnity gave the Mons an opportunity of withdrawing to Arakan or Tenasserim, which were surrendered to the Company by the treaty; but many had not the means for flight, and many naturally were reluctant to leave their homes.

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[1] Gouger, *op. cit.*, p. 319.

[2] According to *Gouger*, p. 308 sqq., Burmese officers were inflicting severe penalties on the Mons even before the evacuation by the garrison; but the episode which he describes does not appear to be mentioned in any other record of the period. It may further be noted that Gouger was writing nearly forty years after the events which he mentions.

[3] Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 143. Compare *Home Series Miscellaneous* Vol. 660, letter dated 21st July, 1825, from Captain Maxton, commanding at Pegu: "34 heads of villages have within the last 2 days come in........ Preparations are being made to rebuild their habitations and under the assurance of the protection of the British Government, which I have held out to them, I trust that the population in general will be induced to follow their example." Vol. 667, Letter dated 13th January, 1826, from Lt.-Col. Smelt, states that a number of petitions from the Mons seeking a continuance of British protection were coming in.

It should at the same time be observed that in the opinion of Robertson, the Political Commissioner, no obligation at all had been incurred towards the Mons. In so far as assistance was received from them it was paid for in cash and should be regarded as a commercial arrangement, he considered; in general, in his opinion, the lower classes had little to fear from the Burmese, since the money they had thus earned would enable them to pay their way out of any trouble, and so far as the upper classes were concerned, they were at all times prepared to support the winning side and were as willing to oppose as to aid the invaders; such popularity as the invaders had among the Mons was due to liberal payments for assistance and to the absence of taxation; and that popularity would not, he held, "survive the change that must ensue when revenue came to be sought for" in the event of annexation.[1]

As soon as the army of occupation left Rangoon, the Myowun released the criminals from the gaol and formed them into a "corps of Braves" whose services were used against the Mons.[2] But the prospect of retribution had already induced the Mons to consider rebellion, and rumours of a threatened rising had reached the Court some time earlier; even in July there had been talk of it. As soon as he took charge at Rangoon, the Myowun therefore made enquiries, and he found that Syriam was the centre of discontent, the thugyi, Maung Sat, who had formerly fought against the English, having now set himself up as a rebel leader. On the 15th December fighting actually began, when Maung Sat's men made an attack on the Burmese troops at Pazundaung and at the Botataung Pagoda. The situation appeared to favour the rebels, and there was a panic in Rangoon which was only allayed when part of the new garrison was brought down from the Shwe Dagon. An urgent message asking for aid was despatched to the Court, and meanwhile, on the 17th of the month, fifteen hundred men were sent against Syriam; but this attempt failed, and the Mons were then able to besiege Rangoon, digging trenches around it and attacking the suburbs. Maung Sat was joined by the Karens of the Dalla district, with whose aid he cut the communications between Rangoon and the capital by occupying Panhlaing. The Mons completely destroyed what was left of Kemmendine; but "a much more extensive desolation presented itself in the vicinity of the town; the large suburb lying between the stockade and the river, and the still larger one of Tacklay, were in ruins; such of the inhabitants as had not fled to our settlements, or taken refuge in the forests, and great numbers had done so, were cooped up within the stockade. The town seemed to be completely beleaguered by the Talains, who were in full occupation of Dalla, the Pegu flag was flying on one side of the river, and the Burman on the other. The only part out of the stockade which the Burmans still retained was the Great Pagoda," narrates an eye-witness.[3] For the time being the Myowun had no option but to endure a siege;

[1] Robertson, *op. cit.*, p. 218.
[2] Gouger, *op. cit.*, p. 323.
[3] Crawfurd, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

he dared not face the rebels in pitched battle, for defeat would involve the certain loss of Rangoon. His efforts were in consequence, despite the urging of some of his officers, restricted to minor sorties which should keep the enemy at a respectful distance from the town. There was a certain amount of fighting in the suburbs, therefore, but not, it would seem, of a very stern character. An observer states: "This day had been decided on by the Burmans, as a fortunate one, for making a *sortie*.......The Burmans came unawares upon their enemy, on the eastern or Tacklay side of the stockade. The Talains, who were cooking or sleeping, fled precipitately, and without offering any resistance, to their boats, which were soon seen crossing the river in numbers and in great haste, although not pursued. The Burman attack in the direction of the Pagoda was not so fortunate; here they were repulsed and suffered some loss. The total killed, wounded, and prisoners, was, after all, very trifling on both sides....The Burmans admitted their own loss in wounded to be fourteen."[1]

There were only some four thousand troops in Rangoon, but they were in difficulties for want of food and seemed likely to be starved out. Fuel also was scarce. According to Burmese accounts, five thousand baskets of rice were purchased from the English to meet the needs of the garrison and from this circumstance it would seem that the Mons had been unable to blockade the River.[2] Despite the precarious nature of their position, the Burmese took vengeance on such Mon prisoners as they could take, some with their wives and children being burnt alive. Some Chinese who lived in Tatgale were also unfortunate; they had not withdrawn to the stockade when the siege began, and this was regarded as a suspicious circumstance, so that when they were captured in a sortie they were sold as slaves to the highest bidder.

The rebellion was soon crushed, however. Troops came down from Upper Burma and managed to enter the town. On the 3rd February the Mons were driven from the Theinbyu and the Botataung Pagoda, and were forced to withdraw to Syriam. They were too demoralised to make a further stand, and when on the 12th February the Burmese crossed the Pegu River to attack the town, the Mons fled without waiting for an assault. Maung Sat fled to Tenasserim, whither some ten thousand of the Mons followed him. He was granted a pension of Rs. 250 a month by the Company, and died in Tenasserim on the 9th October 1830.

The war and the subsequent rebellion did much damage to Rangoon. Ordinary commerce was suspended, and the ship-building industry likewise ceased for the time being. Moreover, much property was destroyed in the various fires which took place in the town; and the suburbs suffered equally, those houses that were not destroyed by the Mon rebels in December 1826 being burnt by the Burmese to provide a field of fire outside the stockade. The American missionary, Judson, states that "the place was invested by the

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[1] *ibid.* "eastern" is presumably an error for "western."

[2] *Konbaungset* II. 442.

Peguans, who have raised the standard of rebellion, and taken possession of several towns in the lower part of the country. From one of the highest roofs within the stockade I obtained a view of the mission house, which afforded us shelter so many years. It is now quite in ruins, nothing remains but the posts and part of the roof. All the houses in the suburbs, and by the river side, are completely swept away."[1] The three Roman Catholic churches, like the Mission House, all suffered destruction. Another eye-witness refers to destruction of a different order; he had been accustomed, he says, to bathe in a small lake, probably one of the Kandawgale tanks, which "was well concealed from public view by magnificent trees and brushwood, and, strange to say, was so little frequented that I was rarely disturbed by an intruder. How I was grieved, when I repeated my visit after the war, to see its dilapidated banks; its luxuriant trees cut down, and its clear sparkling waters converted into a filthy slimy pool! It seemed to have been the common washing-pot for the whole British Army."[2]

More serious damage yet had also been done, for the numerous pagodas in and around the town had been pillaged. By chance, it is said, a soldier found out that within the solid stupas were small gold or silver images of Buddha; they were not in reality of precious metal, but were of plaster gilt or silvered, and worth only a few shillings. Once this was discovered there was a general attack on the pagodas till scarcely one remained unlooted.[3] A single company which was stationed on the Shwe Dagon Pagoda platform obtained in one night a large number of such gold and silver images which they sold to an officer for Rs. 300, he in his turn sending them to Calcutta where he realised a good profit.[4] "All the smaller temples about Rangoon (of which there are several thousand) have been picked by the Europeans for the sake of the small silver Gaudmas," notes an eye-witness.[5] "It was truly melancholy to observe the ravages which had been committed on smaller pagodas surrounding the Shoe Dagoon; one alone, amongst thousands, was preserved from the pillage." The command took no steps to prevent or put an end to this practice; indeed, far from that, participated in and encouraged it, for General Campbell had "an attack made on the bowels of the Shwe Dagon, which was continued till every hope of finding the long expected treasure had vanished."[6]

Bodawpaya's great bell, moreover, was seized as prize of war, but when the Prize Agents tried to transport it to Calcutta they were unsuccessful. The bell was taken down to the River and, with much labour and difficulty, was embarked on a raft to be floated out to a ship; but the raft heeled over and the bell sank to the bottom of the River. It was abandoned by the

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[1] Wayland, *Memoir of Judson*, I. 413.

[2] Gouger, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

[3] Doveton, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

[4] Butler, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

[5] Alexander, *op. cit.*, p. 18, 23.

[6] Butler, *op. cit.*, p. 22 sqq.

PLATE No. 11



Kershaw: Views in the Burman Empire.

VIEW FROM BRIGADIER McCREAGH'S PAGODA, 1824

Prize Agents, but in January 1826 it was recovered in a simple enough manner: two ropes were fastened to it, and these were attached to a ship which was moored over the bell at low water; as the tide came up, the ship rose and lifted the bell with it; the bell was then hauled ashore by the inhabitants of Rangoon and taken back to the Pagoda.[1]

Three place-names of Rangoon derive from the British occupation. The name "Dalla", as applied to Maingthu, became confirmed; the name "Monkey Point" was adopted by the soldiers for the extremity of Queen's Island "from its being a favourite resort of the mimic tribe, which would here fearlessly come down to the waterside to solicit contribution from each boat that glided by";[2] and the bar at the entrance of the port received the name "the Hastings" after, presumably, the former Governor-General the Marquess of Hastings.

Another place-name, which is no longer used, is "Sale's Pagoda", after Lieutenant Sale, later General Sale of Jalalabad fame, who was stationed there with a picket; this Pagoda, now the Signal Pagoda, was also sometimes called McCreagh's Pagoda, after Brigadier McCreagh.[3]

A permanent relic was left in the form of a stone obelisque erected in memory of Major T. Walker, Madras Army, who was killed on the 5th December 1824. This memorial stands by the wall of the Roman Catholic Church in 31st Street.

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[1] Alexander, *op. cit.*, p. 46; Trant *op. cit.*, p. 31.
[2] Doveton, *op. cit.*, p. 205.
[3] See Plate No. 11. This plate shows the view down what is now Signal Pagoda Road.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

THARRAWADDY'S RANGOON.

WITH the resumption of authority by the Burmese officials, life in Rangoon resumed its old course. The suppression of the Mon rebellion was thorough and almost final, and little further disturbance on the part of the Mons occurred during the remaining twenty-six years of Burmese administration. But while politically Rangoon remained in general quiescent, nevertheless it did not develop in commerce or progress in conditions of life. For whereas Rangoon had formerly been the principal port of Burma, and had at the same time been of considerable importance as a base where armies might be concentrated to hold the Delta, Arakan and Tenasserim in check, now Moulmein appeared as a flourishing commercial centre, to a large extent replacing Rangoon as the principal port of Burma, while from the military port of view, not only was the Delta now once more subdued, but also Arakan and Tenasserim had ceased to be provinces of the Burmese Empire, so that the concentration of armies at Rangoon was uncalled for except when some scheme was afoot for reclaiming Burma irredenta: and that could not be until the humiliation of 1826 had to some extent been forgotten with the passage of years. Thus for a time after the First Anglo-Burmese War, Rangoon stagnated.

The system of government of former days was restored. Once more the Myowun ruled the town and the surrounding province with the aid of his subordinate officers, such as the Yewun and the Akaukwun. The Akaukwun continued to be a foreigner; the Spaniard Lanciego, who had lost his office and had been cast into prison as a consequence of the general suspicion with which foreigners of all races were regarded during the War, was allowed to return to his employment, though he did not hold it long, for he was replaced by a Portuguese (or Goanese), Antony Camaratta, about ten years later. The principles on which the administration was conducted remained unchanged; thus liquor and opium remained prohibited except for foreigners, and the eating of flesh was again forbidden, the restriction being at times even extended to the diet of foreign inhabitants, at least during Buddhist Lent, when neither flesh nor fowl was permitted to them[1]. The municipal regulations against fire were again enforced, including the prohibition against the use of thatch during the dry weather, so that, in the words of an American observer of this period, "for nearly half the year, the city presents a most singular appearance, half sad, half silly. By a standing law, on the setting in of the dry season all the thatch must be removed, except a particular kind, not common, made partly of split bamboo, which will not easily burn"[2].

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[1] Wayland, *op. cit.*, II. 300.
[2] Malcom, *Travels in the Burman Empire*, p. 33 sqq.

There is also mention of a method of protection against fire which is not referred to by earlier writers: "on worship days", we are told, "the Viceroy usually went to the Pagoda about 8 a.m., leaving the stockade to be ruled by the Woondouk, or by the Ya-woons[1]. All fires were to be put out while the Viceroy was absent, and as the people generally did their cooking by the side of their houses, in addition to the many other annoyances, there were now let loose the piquets, or executioners, an outlawed tribe of police, who had a circle tattooed on each cheek, and we called them 'spotted faces'. These people would perambulate the street with hen feathers in their ears, which they would thrust in the ashes, and if a feather was curled up from the heat of the ashes, then nothing less than a present of four annas to a rupee would satisfy them; and if not promptly given them, the man or woman, son or daughter, or anyone they could lay hold of, would be taken to the Woons, put in the stocks, and a far greater amount might then be extorted"[2]. Crime continued common, and the police, such as they were, were both inefficient and oppressive. The police were, indeed, really "hangers-on round every official. They were more or less bold, as their master was higher or lower in the official scale. They were generally mere blood-suckers on the community. They were ever ready to stir up strife between neighbours, and even families were not exempt from their pestiferous influence. This state of things made everyone distrustful of his neighbour. If a son or a daughter did not have their way at times, the father or mother were in danger of some complaint to the headman, and suddenly they might find themselves in the stocks without any reason being given. Possibly no one would appear against them at all, and no reasons ever be given why they were there; still, relief from the stocks could not be hoped for without the payment of a bribe or a fine, and that would be graduated by the temper of the official or the means of the payer. In this way husband and wife might punish each other, or their neighbours."[3]

In general appearance, the city of Rangoon had not changed at all. "So wretched a looking town, of its size, I have nowhere seen," writes a traveller of August 1836.[2] "The city is spread upon part of a vast meadow, but little above high tides, and at this season resembling a neglected swamp. The approach from the sea reveals nothing but a few wooden houses between the city and the shore. The fortifications are of no avail against modern methods of attack. They consist of merely a row of timbers set in the ground, rising to the height of about 18 feet, with a narrow platform running round inside for musketeers, and a few cannon, perhaps half a dozen in all, lying at the gateways, in a useless condition. Some considerable streets are back of the town, outside the walls. The entire population is estimated at 50,000, but that is probably too much. There is no other seaport in the empire, but Bassein,

[1] Presumably *Yewuns*.
[2] Bennett, *Rangoon Fifty Years Ago*.
[3] Bennett, *op. cit.*
[4] Malcom, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

which has little trade, and the city stands next in importance to Ava; yet there is nothing in it that can interest the traveller. A dozen foreigners, chiefly Moguls, have brick tenements, very shabby. There are also four or five small brick places of worship, for foreigners,[1] and a miserable Custom House. Besides these, it is a city of bamboo huts, comfortable for this people. considering their habits and climate, but in appearance as paltry as possible, Maulmain has already many better buildings.....The streets are narrow and paved with half-burnt bricks, which, as wheel-carriages are not allowed within the city, are in tolerable repair. There is neither wharf nor quay. In four or five places are wooden stairs, at which small boats may land passengers; but even these do not extend within twenty feet of low water mark. Vessels lie in the stream, and discharge into boats, from which the packages, slung to a bamboo, are lugged on men's shoulders to the customs house." It would thus appear that even the jetty at the King's Wharf had fallen into disrepair by 1836, and that the defences of the town had likewise been neglected: it is elsewhere remarked that at this period "there were no guns mounted on the Stockade, nor any appearance of a warlike demonstration." In general, the town was in a state of decay: even the buildings in the Kaladan, the wealthiest part of the town, "had a shabby appearance," for although they were semi-pukka, they were at the same time "mostly two low storied small structures: the lower storey generally brick, rarely stuccoed, the second storey being of bamboo, covered with leaves in the rainy season, and with split bamboo matting in the hot weather, letting the sun through the interstices."[2]

Outside the stockade on the west, the suburb of Tatgale had, it would seem, not recovered from its destruction during the Mon rebellion, for in 1833 it consisted only of "a small cluster of Burman houses, perhaps 100, occupied by boatmen". To the east were only "a few miserable squatter shanties and a kyoung or two around the Botatoung Pagoda", and, beyond the swamps where hundreds of buffaloes wallowed, the fishing village of Pazundaung.[3] To the north of the town there were still many gardens and orchards producing mango, jack-fruit, and pine-apple.

Commerce continued to labour under the disadvantages from which it had suffered in former days. The prohibition of the export of rice and precious metals continued to be a serious obstacle to trade, and although it seems to have become possible to obtain a licence from the Myowun for exporting the former commodity, such permission could be obtained only subject to the caprice of the officials.[4] Nor were the general conditions under which commerce had to be conducted very much better than had formerly been the case, and although foreign traders were welcome in Rangoon

[1] There were at this period the Armenian Church, three Mosques, and one Roman Catholic Church (Grant: *Rough Pencillings of a Rough Trip*, p. 21).

[2] Bennett, *op. cit.* See Plate No. 12 — *From the Verandah of Captain Brown's residence*, showing a scene in 1846 of what is now the heart of commercial Rangoon (see Map No. IV).

[3] Bennett, *op. cit.*

[4] *India Political Consultations* 21st November, 1836, No. 39.

and no restrictions were placed in the way of their accumulating property, they were still deterred from coming there by the impediments which their commerce had to endure. True that by the Treaty of Yandabo it had been stipulated that no arbitrary exactions should be levied on British ships and that guns, rudders, etc., need no longer be landed, and that the supplementary commercial treaty of 1826 provided for the free ingress and egress of British merchants, who were to be allowed to carry on their trade unmolested; but Crawfurd, who negotiated the commercial treaty, endeavoured in vain to secure freedom of export of the precious metals, and equally failed to obtain any relaxation of the law prohibiting the emigration of females. Complaints of arbitrary exactions continued to be made; and apart from that the port dues still remained high. For a few months, in 1834, the authorities were persuaded to try the experiment of reducing these charges on the argument that an increase in trade would follow; but after six months the old scale of dues was reimposed.[1] For some years after the War, moreover, the heavy taxation necessitated by the large indemnity payable under the Treaty of Yandabo handicapped trade; and also the trade of Rangoon suffered because no customs dues were levied along the Arakan and Tenasserim frontiers, across which a large quantity of goods came into Burma, the importers of which could undersell the Rangoon merchants. But after 1830 customs dues were levied on the land-frontiers.

Under the prevailing conditions it was inevitable that trade should to some extent pass to the new port of Moulmein, where such impediments to commerce were unknown and through which teak, the major export of Burma, obtainable from the Salween valley, could be exported as easily as through Rangoon. But a good deal of raw cotton continued to be exported to the mills of Dacca, the amount increasing to about two million pounds' weight annually, and a considerable quantity of cotton piece goods continued to be imported. It was said, moreover, that almost any type of British manufacture could be purchased in Rangoon at reasonable prices[2]. A good deal of smuggling of gold, silver, and precious stones went on, as in former days, despite the penalties imposed on those detected in such crimes. According to some accounts, however, Rangoon was at this period a dying port. A visitor to the town in the 1830's states that the arrival of a European ship was "comparatively rare"[3] and in the recollection of a resident of that period, "as the trade of the Port was very small, and as the rules for export were often prohibitory, a vessel of 20 to 40 tons with now and then a Burmese 'Kattoo' was able to convey from port to port all the fish, ngapi, betel nut, tobacco, chillies, etc., which then formed the staple of Rangoon commerce. These vessels were rarely full of freight."[4] Even the great Pagoda Fair was declining in the early '30's; in 1832 it was remarked that "During the present

[1] *Bengal Secret and Political Consultations* 1st July, 1831, No. 7.
[2] Malcom, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
[3] Wheeler, *Reminiscences of Ava.*
[4] Bennett, *op. cit.*

season scarcely ten Shan traders have come here. The whole of the caravans of that race have gone to Moulmein, contradicting a notion which generally prevailed here that pilgrimages to the Great Dagon Pagoda would always keep the Shan trade for this town."[1] Yet there is also good evidence that in the '30's the trade of Rangoon was by no means so inconsiderable as these statements suggest. In 1836 the Rangoon-Calcutta trade was said to be worth nine lakhs of rupees a year; and an official record of the shipping which regularly traded to the port shows that thirty-eight vessels of fair size, with a total tonnage of over 16,000 tons, habitually used the harbour, besides country boats totalling about 4,000 tons.[2] Presumably these vessels paid more than one visit during the year, so that in 1838 the volume of shipping compared very favourably with that of the peak-year of the pre-war period, 1822, when fifty-six square-rigged vessels cleared the port. It is, however, possible that there is no real inconsistency, and that with the gradual restoration of normal conditions as the memory of the war receded into the background, commerce did in fact improve as the 1830's went on. At the same time, in view of the competition of Moulmein, through which a great deal of traffic was carried by the overland route via Toungoo to the capital,[3] it may be concluded that the trade of Rangoon, while not necessarily declining, did not by any means develop as it naturally should have done.

As in earlier days, goods on landing were taken to the Custom House inside the stockade, where the duties were paid in kind. When the King's tax and the perquisites of the officials had been taken, the remainder of the imported articles were stamped with a peacock in indigo blue to signify that duty had been paid. Ships coming up to the Port had still to anchor off the mouth of the River until a pilot could be obtained, for the pilot-brig of the temporary British administration had not been maintained by the Burmese Government; and it was still often necessary to send a boat as far as the town before a pilot could be found. All vessels still had to stop at the Chokey to render an account of themselves.

The population of the town was locally estimated during this period at fifty thousand,[4] but other contemporary evidence gives only twenty-five thousand[5], and even this figure is doubtless an exaggeration, for there is no reason to suppose that there was any marked growth in the size of the town after 1826. Probably the number of inhabitants was still not more than ten thousand. Of these a number were, as in former days, foreigners: Armenians, Parsis, Muslims, Hindus, a few Chinese, and a handful of Europeans, engaged in the trade and industry of the town. At the time when the Burmese administration was restored, the number of foreign traders had considerably

[1] *Bengal Secret and Political Consultations* 9th July, 1832, No. 11.

[2] See *Appendix B: Shipping in 1803 and 1838.*

[3] *Bengal Secret and Political Consultations, ibid.*

[4] Malcom, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

[5] Bennett, *op. cit.*

increased. An "overwhelming crowd of adventurers," it was said,[1] had come in the train of the invading army in the hope of making their fortunes; but few of them remained after the evacuation. In 1830 there were only four or five Europeans in the place[2], and the number continued small, probably never exceeding a dozen all told; an official record of 1838 shows that in that year there were ten European-British subjects in Rangoon, two British subjects of partially Asiatic blood, five Armenian-British subjects, twelve Parsis from Bombay, and seven other British-Indian subjects[3]. They were ship-builders and dealers in timber and cheap cottons. Ship-building, however, like the teak trade, tended to decline. The competition of Moulmein helped to undermine the Rangoon ship-building industry, and though a few ships were still built, their construction was weak and they could not rival the products of the new ship-yards of Tenasserim. As in earlier times, lack of iron was a fundamental weakness. Coir cables were generally used, for example; and thus one vessel, the *Tigrand*, built by an Armenian, Sarkies Manook, was lost on its first voyage because its cables parted during a squall off the Nicobars. The port-rules, moreover, encouraged eccentricity of design; ships of not more than sixteen feet beam were exempt from anchorage dues, and one ship-builder constructed a vessel of three hundred tons, the *Colonel Burney*, which conformed to the normal model of ships to within two or three feet of the deck, from which point the hull sloped sharply inwards so that the deck should measure only sixteen feet. The same ship-builder—May Flower Crisp, who had piloted the invading force up the River in 1824 and subsequently entered into partnership with a long-established merchant, R. J. Trill—experimented further by building a ship with two keels, giving her the appropriate name of *Original*. The ship-building yards still lay on the tidal creek which ran through Tatgale near the line of modern Latter Street. It appears that Maingthu, however, had sunk into complete insignificance, for there is no evidence of any industry there[4].

The foreigners who frequented the town seem to have been of a turbulent type. Perhaps the disaster which had befallen the Burmese arms in 1824-26 had encouraged them to treat the local authorities with contempt. Whatever the reason, it is apparent that some of them were continually at loggerheads with the local government. For example, May Flower Crisp was several times imprisoned for refusing to shikho the Myowun in the street[5]; and feeling himself aggrieved on one occasion he "went to the Rangoon Woon-

[1] Gouger, *op. cit.*, p. 306.

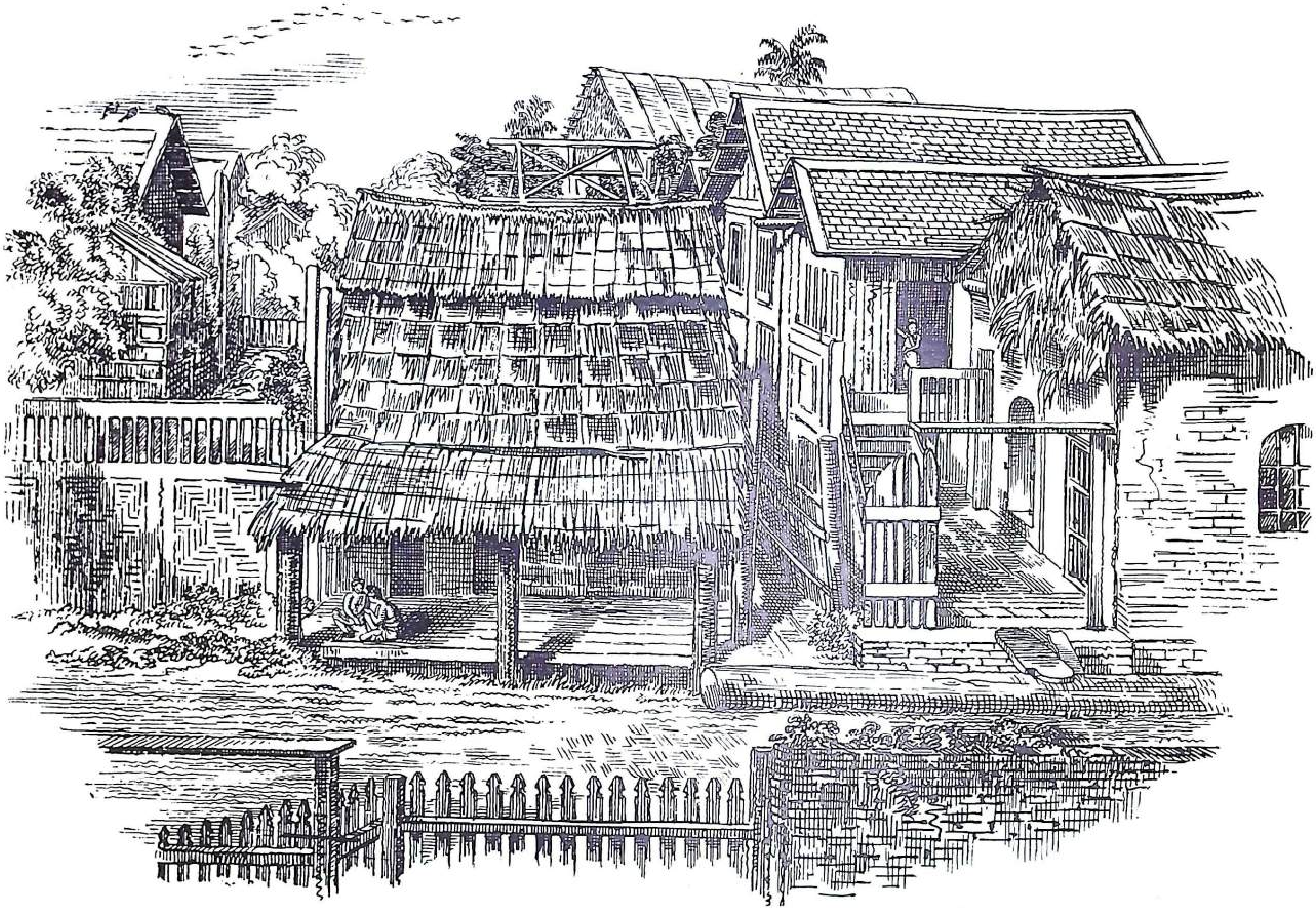
[2] Wheeler, *op. cit.*

[3] The names of the British subjects were — *Europeans* John Brown, William Henry Biden, May Flower Crisp, Daniels, Dixon, Hazelwood, William Roy, William Spiers, David Staig, G. R. Trill; *Half Casts* Peter Johnson, James McCalder; *Armenians* Abraham Aratoon, Jacob Isaac, Lucas, Manook, Josiah Manook; *Parsees* Bajojee Hormetjee, Byramjee Cowasjee, Edeljee, Fromjee, Fromjee Cowasjee, Jamashjee, Naservenjee, Parunjee Javameta, Rustomjee, Rustomjee Hoormatjee, Rustomjee Nursonjee, Shapoonjee Cowasjee; *Indians* Chokera, Jowee Ally, Koola Moodeen, Phool Kassie, Pooran Saib, Shaik Mahomet, Tittoo (*India Secret Consultations*, 21st November, 1838, No. 124).

[4] Bennett, *op. cit.*

[5] Wheeler, *op. cit.*

PLATE No. 12



Grant: Rough Pencillings of a Rough Trip to Rangoon.

FROM THE VERANDAH OF CAPTAIN BROWN'S RESIDENCE, 1846.

gyee's house, treated him with disrespect, and used indecorous language".[1] The cause of this episode was the refusal of a request which he had made for a reduction of port dues, but "on the Viceroy producing the Commercial Treaty and explaining that no more than the customary duties were demanded, Mr. Crisp said that the Treaty may be binding to you and the Company, but if we do not get justice we will go to the Company's master, and other words so offensive to the Woongyee that he got up and quitted the hall".[2] By "the Company's master" he evidently meant the imperial Government at Westminster. It is not without significance that the official list of British subjects resident in Rangoon in 1838 adds the comment "Character bad" after the names of some of them, one of them David Staig, being described as "a very unprincipled man and of a very violent disposition," while one of the Anglo-Indians, James McCalder, is stated to be "a receiver of stolen goods; keeps a grog-shop." Even those who escaped the condemnation of the official record, appear often to have been in difficulties with the authorities, usually for smuggling gold and silver out of the country.

In the earlier times the foreign mercantile body had been supplemented by the presence of missionaries; but after the War the American Baptist Mission practically ceased to exist so far as Rangoon was concerned. The mission-house in the suburbs, destroyed during the war and the subsequent rebellion, was never rebuilt; a house was taken in the town in its stead, but though sporadic efforts were made to keep the mission alive, these had little success. Missionaries, as before, were tolerated only in the capacity of ministers to the foreign inhabitants: as such they were welcome; and any attempt at preaching to the indigenous inhabitants was regarded with suspicion and alarm. "It is not probable," wrote an official of the American Baptist Mission in 1836, "that any native would be allowed openly to confess that he had changed his religion," for "the spirit of persecution has never intermitted at Rangoon and the acts of it very seldom."[3] Indeed, he expressly states that missionary enterprise in Burma proper had been a dismal failure, and that the Baptist Mission in the Burmese kingdom "may almost be said to be extinct." Again in 1846 Judson wrote that no missionary had for a long time attempted to establish himself in Rangoon; and when he went to the town in the following year he complained that "it is not as a missionary or propagator of religion but as a minister of a foreign religion, ministring to the foreigners in the place, that I am well received"; and, a month later, "the Governor of Rangoon...... received me in the most kind and encouraging manner, but only in the character of a minister of the Protestant religion, coming to minister to the foreigners."[4] For all practical purposes, the mission ceased to exist in Rangoon after the War.

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[1] Bayfield, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
[2] *Bengal Secret and Political Consultations* 23rd May, 1828, No. 16.
[3] Malcom, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
[4] Wayland, *op. cit.*, II. 276-6.

Though the mission-house no longer existed, the cemetery attached to it was still in use. It had become the general European burial ground, and after the missionaries abandoned Rangoon it was secured for this purpose by a merchant named Spiers, who obtained a grant of the land from the Myowun. It continued in use up to and shortly after the War of 1852.[1]

Conditions of life for Europeans were, as in earlier days, not at all satisfactory in the matter of food. It was as difficult as ever to obtain much besides rice and fowls. "A few fish were exhibited in the bazaar, but it was so disreputable to trade, even in these, that they could scarcely be found, except in a half-putrid state. The only baker in town left soon after our arrival; and we were forced to live almost exclusively on boiled rice and fowls."[2] But food, if limited in variety, was cheap. Owing to the prohibition of the export of paddy, rice sold at Rs. 5 a hundred baskets; wheat was Rs. 40 a hundred baskets; fowls and ducks were from six to ten a rupee; China tea was about four annas a pound; eggs were fifty a rupee; milk about a rupee a gallon; pineapples four annas a hundred; oil for lamps and cooking, one rupee a pound; wood for a month's fuel cost Rs. 1-8. A servant could be obtained for Rs. 12 a month, though washing cost Rs. 8 a hundred pieces. A Burman could support his family on two or three rupees a month; while a non-European Christian family eating meat required Rs. 30—evidence of the high price of meat. Medicines were both scarce and dear. Labour costs were naturally low, a cooly being paid four annas a day.

For some years after 1826 foreign residents had the protection of a British officer. Lieutenant (later Captain) G. H. Rawlinson, assisted for a time by Captain Robert Ware, remained in Rangoon after the evacuation in December 1826 for the purpose of receiving the remaining instalments of the indemnity due under the Treaty of Yandabo, and these officers acted as political agents of General Campbell, who was still Chief Commissioner for Burmese affairs. In their capacity of political assistants, they fulfilled in effect the functions of diplomatic officers. Thus they intervened when, as early as 1827, a monopoly of all export trade from Burma was given, in complete defiance of the Treaty of Yandabo and of the Commercial Treaty, to Sarkies Manook, and a heavy duty was imposed on all British goods brought into the harbour even if they were not intended to be landed but were merely in transit to other ports: the intention being that Manook should in return for the monopoly pay the interest on the overdue instalment of the indemnity. Rawlinson's protest, however, was effective, and monopoly and duty were both abolished.[3]

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[1] *The Memorial in 33rd Street.* See *Appendix C: The Crisp Family.*

[2] Wayland, *op. cit.*, II. 300.

[3] Bayfield, *op. cit.*, p. 50. The statement of *Crawfurd* I. 53 that a merchant was called on to pay rent to the King for a house in respect of the two years that the town had been in British hands, seems to be erroneous; the reference is apparently to the case of John Laird, but Bengal Secret and Political Consultations 5th April, 1827, No. 46 shows that Laird was trying to exact rent from the King.

Again, when May Flower Crisp indulged in his altercation with the Myowun, Ware held an enquiry and found that the complaints made against the rates of port-charges were unreasonable, and that the more respectable merchants had not been party to the affair; he further assured the Myowun that Crisp's behaviour was improper and that British merchants were expected to make representations only through the British officers stationed in Rangoon. The Government of India concurred in this view and warned the merchants that "unless they regulate their conduct according to the advice of the constituted authority on the spot, and appeal through him in all cases of difference or dispute with the Burmese officers or subjects, they will not be considered entitled to the protection and assistance either of the Supreme Government or local Representative at Rangoon."[1] It would appear from this statement that in 1828 the Government of India was prepared to accept the principle that it should maintain officers in Rangoon to guard the interests of British subjects. This principle was, moreover, pressed on Government by General Campbell, whose view was that "Rangoon has long been notorious as an asylum for fraudulent debtors and violent and unprincipled characters from every part of India, and the only way of keeping this description of persons in order and preventing them from disgracing the British character, impairing British interests, and disturbing the good understanding which now subsists between the British and Burmese Governments, would be by the Supreme Government maintaining always a British officer at that port, and conferring upon him the same judicial powers as are entrusted to British consuls at Constantinople and in the Barbary States."[2] The Treaty of Yandabo did in fact authorise the maintenance of an agent in Burma, though no system of capitulations was provided for; and the upshot was that for the purpose of supervising the British subjects in Burma and for other reasons, in 1830 Colonel Henry Burney, whose father, Richard Thomas Burney, had died in Rangoon in 1808, was sent to Burma as Resident.

The records of the Residency shed a good deal of light on conditions in Rangoon at this period. Thus a few month's after Burney's arrival he had to deal with a curious testamentary case. A Captain Sumner, who died in Rangoon, had left considerable property in the form of merchandise and a ship that was being built in the ship-yard; but certain creditors of Madras and Pondichery had claims against him. Two British subjects of bad character, Low and McCalder, produced a will purporting to be signed by Sumner, appointing them executors, and they proceeded to dispose of the property. The creditors asserted that the will was a forgery, and that Sumner's name had been affixed to it "with his own hand after his death." Burney secured an injunction from the Hlutdaw, and so was able to satisfy the creditors' demands.[3] Again, the European merchants complained that the Yewun was taking bribes from debtors in consideration of releasing them

[1] *Bengal Secret and Political Consultations* 23rd May, 1828, Nos. 16, 18.
[2] Bayfield, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
[3] Bayfield, *op. cit.*, p. 64; *Bengal Secret and Political Consultations* 15th December, 1830, No. 7.

from imprisonment, and Burney was able to secure an order from the Hlutdaw that "When a debtor is confined, he must be deprived of his liberty according to the laws and customs of the Burmese and not allowed to go to feasts or to go about the City like another man who does not owe money. It must be the duty also of the Woongyee to assist all merchants to recover their lawful debtors (*sic*) without any delay or trouble."[1] Burney also endeavoured to persuade the Hlutdaw to permit the export of precious metals, as such a measure would "certainly facilitate and extend commerce in this country although our merchants at Rangoon do not appear to experience much difficulty in smuggling specie out of the country—a practice which as long as it is their interest to pursue no regulation of the Burmese Government will ever be able to prevent. Even the vigilance of the new Custom's Master at Rangoon, Mr. Lanciago, does not appear to have enhanced the difficulty much." But this was a subject upon which "the King holds peculiar opinions and the Ministers dare not oppose them without being able to show some good cause," so that all Burney's persuasions were in vain.[2] He was able to intervene with success, however, when certain merchants suffered the loss of over twenty thousand rupees silver which was discovered and confiscated by the customs authorities when they were endeavouring to ship it out of the Port. The merchants concerned, Messrs. Roy and Lane, were "the most respectable British merchants in the kingdom" and "this was the first instance of their having been detected violating its laws", so in consideration of these circumstances the Hlutdaw refunded the money.[3] A royal order reducing taxation in Rangoon was also issued at Burney's instance, as an incentive to trade. Burney's services were clearly of great value to the mercantile interest, and trade appears to have flourished while he was in Burma, so far as it could flourish in the face of the competition of Moulmein. He also exercised judicial functions on at least one occasion, when "two Europeans, natural born British subjects, one named Bartly who had lately come from Moulmein where he was employed as a shipwright, and the other a deserter from H.M. 41st Regiment, have been apprehended by the Burmese authorities and confined in irons for having robbed and murdered a lascar in the suburbs of Rangooon"; the Myowun was reluctant to execute the criminals under Burmese law, and he was able to solve his difficulty by handing them over to the Resident to be deported to Calcutta for trial there, the witnesses in the case being later sent to Calcutta also by the Wun's order.[4] This case is of some importance, since no system of extraterritoriality had been established by treaty and the remitting of the case to the Resident was a purely voluntary act on the part of the Burmese authorities. Evidently there was a disposition to regard a system of capitulations as a desirable means of dealing with foreign nationals.

[1] *Bengal Secret and Political Consultations* 1st July, 1831, No. 5.
[2] *Bengal Secret and Political Consultations* 21st January, 1831, No. 6.
[3] *Bengal Political Consultations* 8th May, 1834, No. 32.
[4] *India Political Consultations* 24th February, 1835, No. 21; 18th May, 1835, No. 59.

At the same time, Burney's duty required him to spend most of his time at the capital, and after Rawlinson left in 1833 there were long periods when there was no British representative in Rangoon. Burney therefore proposed that Dr. G. T. Bayfield, who was surgeon to the Residency, should be posted to Rangoon to guard commercial interests; but the Government of India declined to sanction the expenditure involved. One effect of the absence of the Resident was that complaints of oppression and injustice were again advanced by the foreign merchants who complained that "during the absence of the Resident from Rangoon, British subjects have no protection",[1] and there was, moreover, no means of determining how far these complaints were or were not justified. Equally there was no method of settling disputes among the British subjects themselves; and also instances occurred in which commanders of ships landed sickly seamen in Rangoon and left them there stranded, there being no one to bring pressure to bear on the commander to take such men away[2]. The death of the Wungyi Maung Khaing in 1835 and the appointment as Myowun of the Queen's Wungyi, Maung Wa, "an arrogant, obstinate old man," increased the difficulties and caused many protests to be made to the Government of India, even the Bengal Chamber of Commerce being moved to protest in view of the importance of the interests involved and to demand the appointment of a consul at Rangoon, the trade of which with Calcutta amounted, it was stated, to nine lakhs of rupees a year. Colonel Burney had long been pressing for such an appointment, and the Government of India now seriously considered the matter. Seeking, inevitably, economy, it asked Burney whether one of the British merchants might not be appointed Consul with an allowance of Rs. 100 per mensem; but Burney objected to such a measure, for jealousy would be aroused among the other merchants, the consul might subordinate consular interests to private mercantile interests, and also as "a merchant at Rangoon cannot trade there extensively without smuggling specie out of the country in defiance of the established laws" the situation would certainly arise that the British Consul would come into conflict with the authorities. He urged therefore the appointment of a regular officer, pointing out that by such means the prevailing impression that Government was not concerned with the interests of the Rangoon merchants would be removed, and trade would in consequence greatly increase. If, he suggested, an official Consul were stationed in Rangoon, and if also one or two British warships visited the port every year, British influence would be increased and the troubles of the merchants would largely solve themselves.

The Chamber of Commerce had proposed the appointment of "Captain" William Spiers, the purchaser of the English cemetery, who was a half-pay naval lieutenant settled in Rangoon as a merchant; but the remaining merchants bore out Burney's comment on the jealousy rampant among the mercantile

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[1] *India Political Consultations* 28th March, 1836, No. 56.
[2] *ibid.* 16th November, 1835, No. 41.

community by submitting a protest through the troublesome May Flower Crisp, who not only objected to the appointment of Spiers on personal grounds, but opposed the whole suggestion of establishing the consular office, saying that the proposal was contrary to the Treaty of Yandabo and would therefore encourage the Burmese Government also to disregard that Treaty, an argument with which Burney failed to agree. Meanwhile, complaints of ill-treatment continued, as the case of James Dorrett of the schooner *London* illustrates. In May 1836 when the schooner was going down the River, it was boarded by two Burmese officers and a party of men, who beat Dorrett, the commander, bound him hand and foot, and stole over three hundred rupees worth of silver. Dorrett also complained that his crew had been encouraged to desert and that when he protested he was threatened with being put in the stocks. The Resident obtained an order from the Hlutdaw for the punishment of those responsible, but evidently the position of foreign traders and ships' captains in the port of Rangoon was liable to be very precarious.

After October 1837, when Burney finally left the country, Dr. Bayfield was stationed at Rangoon in charge of the Residency pending the appointment of a new Resident. During the nine months that Bayfield was in independent charge, he seems to have been largely concerned in solving the difficulties into which British subjects got in the port. Thus a trader from Tavoy, one Nga Nyo, complained that the Yewun had demanded an unauthorised perquisite of two bundles of wax candles, value two rupees, and that the officers at the Chokey at Danot had also levied improper charges of two rupess; Bayfield was able to recover the amounts. Mg Shwe Bo of Mergui was granted a certificate showing that he was a British subject, as he wanted to go into the interior to trade. On occasion Bayfield intervened to soften the rigours of the law. Mr. Snowball, of the schooner *Louisa*, who had been trading to Rangoon for many years, was accused in the Myowun's court of assaulting a wharf cooly, and was fined Rs. 60 plus costs. He refused to pay the costs and was therefore incarcerated in default of finding security for the payment. Bayfield induced the Myowun to release him, his official interpreter going bail; and next day as a favour the Myowun reduced the costs by half, on Bayfield's representations, because Snowball was a poor man and had been led into the assault by the abusive language of the cooly. Again, he intervened to protect a woman of Moulmein, Ma Mentha; Ma Mentha had been sold as a slave by her mother to one Shwe Ao for twelve rupees, some twenty years before, and had lived with him in Rangoon until the Anglo-Burmese War. When the British left in 1826 she went to Moulmein and married there. Now she came with her husband to the Shwe Dagon festival, was recognised by Shwe Ao and arrested at his instance. At Bayfield's request the Myowun ordered her release and severely censured the officer who had arrested her.[1]

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[1] Desai: *The British Residency in Burma.*

Bayfield appears, indeed, to have exercised a consular jurisdiction over British nationals in the port as Burney had formerly done. Thus in his Diary is recorded the following: "Captain Nicols, formerly of the schooner *Hebe,* charged with forcibly entering a private house at between 9 and 10 o'clock last night, and offering some violence to a Burmese female, the wife of an officer of Government. Charge denied, and as it was too late in the day to collect the evidence, 10 o'clock tomorrow morning was appointed for the investigation. . . The complaint against Captain Nicols having been satisfactorily proved, and his own witnesses admitting he had been attending a convivial party and was not very sober and committed himself, I sentenced him to pay a fine of forty Rupees, with which the Yewoon expressed himself satisfied. Had the Yewoon insisted upon inflicting the full fine, as established by law, the amount, including law charges, would have been one hundred and two Rupees. This, however, would have been an act of severity, as Captain Nicols does not appear to have used any violence beyond entering the house and seizing the woman's hand"[1]. As it is stated that the Yewun sent this case to Bayfield for trial, it appears that the local authorities were still ready to recognise the establishment of a consular jurisdiction for dealing with foreign nationals. Further, the Resident required all British subjects to register themselves at his office, as this measure "might operate as some check upon those of questionable character and fidelity".[2] Thus the Residency exercised very important functions apart from its purely diplomatic duties. The readiness of the Burmese authorities to recognise consular jurisdiction is explained by the turbulent character of the British nationals in the port, who must have been extremely troublesome to the officials; and the violence of their conduct and the jealousies which divided them are well illustrated by the following extract from a letter written by May Flower Crisp at a period when there was no British representative in the town to deal with such cases: "The other night Mr. Staig went on board his schooner and there quarrelled with his captain. The captain being in bodily fear armed himself with a sword. Mr. Staig was wounded in the wrist. The captain was put in the Custom House. On the following morning the Woonduck sent for Mr. Brown and his two messmates, Roy and Spiers; the latter was sick. Biden was sent for and Mr. Larkin's nephew, when the case was investigated and the captain remanded to prison and eventually put in treble irons. On learning that this select jury had omitted to protest against viewing the captain in the light of aggressor, the whole of the European community (Roy, Brown and Spiers excepted) conceived the best step would be to proceed to the Woonduck in a body. Nevertheless this minority objected and thereby destroyed unanimity. Under these circumstances I waited on the Sharbundah and convinced him that Mr. Staig was the aggressor. Captain Rausman addressed a letter to

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[1] *India Secret Consultations* 21st November, 1838. *Bayfield's Journal.*

[2] *ibid.*

him to the same effect. I explained to the Sharbundah that on Government refusing the security of us merchants, we should have no other alternative but to solicit of our Government to send hither a ship of war as security, in as much as Capt. McGrath might die in jail. The next day the Woonduck sent for the jury when the Captain was liberated on bail. Had we gone in a body two pilots would have avowed that Mr. Staig had said he had a pistol and a dirk. Now, however, they are afraid, Mr. Staig being in debt to them both which, with his influence with the Woonduck, renders him an object of terror to them".[1] This statement not only illustrates the troublesome character of the foreigners, with their violence of conduct and their threats of visitations by ships of war, but also suggests that despite the frequent complaints of oppressive actions on the part of the Burmese officials, the latter were in reality anxious, at least on this occasion and therefore presumably on other occasions also, to be reasonable and conciliatory, since the more respectable merchants were constituted a board of assessors to advise the Wun in his judgment. It may be noted that this episode occurred at a time when relations between the Burmese Government and the Government of India were more than usually strained. While the proceedings of the local officials were no doubt at times arbitrary and even oppressive, nevertheless the conclusion can hardly be avoided that they were sorely tried by the foreigners with whom they had to deal, and that the complaints levied against them were often grossly exaggerated.

Another problem with which Bayfield was concerned arose from reforms which King Tharrawaddy had instituted after his accession in 1837. With a view to encouraging trade, the King had reduced certain port dues and had also abolished the old tax of ten per cent on the wages of coolies and carpenters employed in connection with the shipping. But further he wished to systematise the conditions under which cooly labour worked. So far such labour had been of a casual nature, the merchants employing coolies direct; orders were now issued that the coolies were to be organised into gangs under the control of the Akaukwun, who would see that the gangs were employed in rotation without favour or selection. The merchants objected to this proposal, even though it was also laid down that there should be no increase of wages; and although the Myowun reiterated the order, they refused to work the scheme. Bayfield was sympathetic to the point of view of the Burmese authorities, but since the merchants stood firm he induced the Myowun to allow them to hire their coolies in the bazaar as formerly at competitive rates of wages.[2]

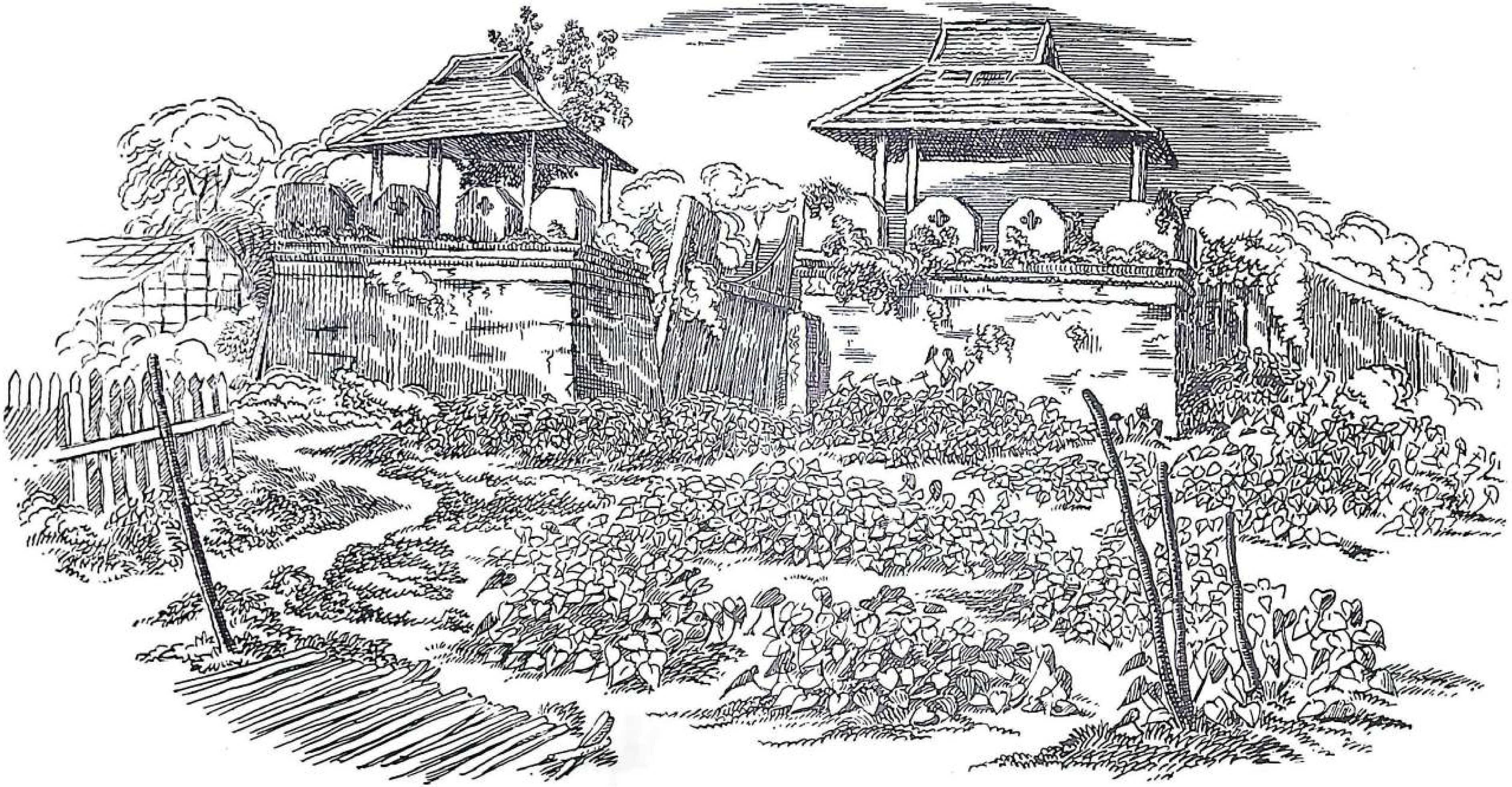
In July 1838 Colonel Benson arrived in Rangoon to assume charge of the Residency. He was well received by the Myowun, and salutes were fired by the battery as well as by H.M.S. *Rattlesnake* on which he had come. The Yewun met Benson at the wharf and conducted him in procession through the streets, which were lined with troops and crowded with spectators, to the house

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[1] *India Political Consultations* 17th July, 1839, No. 54.

[2] Desai *op. cit.*

PLATE No. 13



Grant: Rough Pencillings of a Rough Trip to Rangoon.

YODEGA GATEWAY, 1846.

where Burney had formerly lived. This house stood on a site at the junction of the present Merchant Street and 36th Street; it belonged to Sarkies Manook and was rented at Rs. 200 a month. It is described as being "like a large barn."[1] Benson desired to proceed to the capital; but King Tharrawaddy, who, in accordance with the Burmese view that a monarch was not bound by treaties entered into by his predecessor, declined to recognise the Treaty of Yandabo, was most reluctant to admit another Resident, whose presence at the capital he regarded as a restriction on his sovereign authority. For this reason he had lately posted to Rangoon a new Myowun who held the rank of Ayebaing, in the hope that any British Resident who might come would agree to transact his business at Rangoon itself with a Myowun who was regarded as his equal in rank. Benson, however, insisted on going to the capital, and his determination led to a marked change in the Myowun's attitude. He became distinctly less friendly, and when on Benson's departure the usual salute was fired by H.M.S. *Rattlesnake*, he sent a strong protest, asserting that the firing of salutes, even salutes of muskets, was contrary to law and custom; while Bayfield, who remained in charge at Rangoon after Benson left, was put to a great deal of inconvenience. Thus the Myowun refused to transact any business with him, and ordered him to vacate the house in which he was living. Bayfield then went to a house by the riverside, which was sublet to him by the merchant Roy, who had rented it from an Armenian, Gabriel Elijah. The Myowun pressed Elijah to evict Bayfield, and threatened to confiscate the house if this were not done; but Bayfield firmly refused to go, saying that he had rented the house from Roy, not from Elijah; and as Roy pointed out that he could not reasonably be called on to evict the representative of his own government, the Myowun dropped the subject. But in other ways he continued to be aggressive and uncivil. He impeded the transit of stores and letters to Benson at the capital; and in October the Akaukwun, Antony Camaratta, at the Myowun's instance, issued an order requiring all letters to be delivered to the Custom House. So when a vessel, the *Mary*, arrived from Penang with packets for the Residency, the Akaukwun refused to allow them to be delivered direct to Bayfield. Bayfield addressed an official order to the ship's commander, Captain Davis, who then handed the letters over to the Residency messenger; but the consequence of this was that the owner of the vessel, Cowasjee, was imprisoned. Bayfield drew attention to the injustice of such a proceeding, but the Myowun received his messenger with violent language and declared that as Bayfield was not the Resident he had no right to address him in such a manner, though "if I had any debts to recover, I might, he said, petition him as a merchant." The Myowun released Cowasjee, but reissued the order relating to letters, and even threatened to punish Bayfield if he continued to receive packages in contravention of this command. This interference with the mails continued until Benson, at the capital,

[1] Grant, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

protested to the Hlutdaw, but though the Myowun thereafter ceased to interfere with the postal arrangements, no apology for his behaviour was ever made.[1]

The incivility which Bayfield experienced was extended to other British subjects also. A warship, H.M.S. *Favourite*, was in the port in the October of 1838, and three of the "young gentlemen" of the ship while riding through the town one day accidentally knocked down a child, who received a slight bruise on the forehead but was otherwise uninjured; the three midshipmen were thereupon brought before the Yewun who sentenced them to a fine of Rs. 60. Bayfield, who had become accustomed to dealing himself with charges against British subjects, was indignant that no reference had been made to him, and protested also against the infliction of such a penalty for a purely accidental injury. The fine had, however, been paid before he received news of the occurrence, and it does not appear that the money was refunded.[2]

Part of the difficulty which the Residency experienced was due to the antagonism of certain of the British nationals in the port, one of whom, David Staig, did all in his power to prejudice the Burmese officials against the British representatives, being anxious to prevent the permanent establishment of a British consulate and the supervision to which his conduct would in consequence be subjected.[3]

Benson found conditions at the capital intolerable, and left Burma for good in April 1839, his assistant W. C. McLeod remaining in charge as Amarapura; but McLeod also found it impossible to stay there and he removed to Rangoon in July. In the meantime the difficulties at Rangoon had continued. A Bengali servant of the Residency was seized and put in iront because he had provided bullocks for slaughter to the warships which had recently been in the port; and though his providing the bullocks was no doubt a breach of the law forbidding the use of meat, that law had not of late been generally enforced against foreigners.[4] When McLeod reached Rangoon and took up his residence in the house formerly used by Burney, he managed, however, to keep on good terms with the local government for some months. But relations between the Burmese Government and the Government of India were strained, and this circumstance was reflected in the difficulty which was now experienced in protecting the foreign merchants against excessive demands by the local officials. Thus Captain Biden purchased the schooner *Original* from Crisp, and laid her up for repairs; but when the repairs were completed the Akaukwun demanded a fee of five rupees for every spring tide that the vessel lay on shore, and refused to give port clearance for Moulmein until the appropriate amount of ten rupees had been paid. And further Biden was compelled to pay a fee of six per cent on the purchase price of the ship. Both these demands were unprecedented. In the latter case, it appears that a

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[1] *India Secret Consultations* 21st November, 1838, Nos. 135 — 143.
[2] *ibid.* 13th February, 1839, No. 72.
[3] *ibid.* 21st November, 1838, No. 128.
[4] *ibid.* 8th May, 1839, Nos. 30 and 31.

fee of six per cent was payable on the purchase price of real property, but it had never been previously demanded in respect of shipping. Shortly afterwards the port charges of Messrs. Trill and Crisp's brig *Pyeen Boung*, which had for eight years been assessed at ten rupees, were raised to over three hundred rupees. Protests from the Residency were unavailing, and the Government of India took the attitude that it "does not think that the present will be the proper time to bring forward complaints of this nature against the Burmese authorities."[1] Such circumstances, together with the rumours of impending war, caused some of the foreign merchants to think of removing to Moulmein, and the trade of Rangoon, which had shown signs of improvement under the protection of the Residency, again declined. The situation was not eased by the behaviour of the egregious May Flower Crisp, who was in the habit of telling the Burmans that the Indian Government was going shortly to invade and annex Burma; McLeod warned Crisp of the folly of indulging in such indiscreet talk, but without effect.[2]

In November 1839 the Ayebaing was replaced by a new Myowun, of lower rank. This officer was inclined at first to be civil but he appears not to have had the same control over his subordinates and the general populace as his predecessor; McLeod found his position precarious, for the Residency was in the middle of the town, and he was exposed to the abuse of "the drunken followers of the officials and the insolent Burmese musketeers." He resolved to withdraw to Moulmein, and sent for a warship on which to take his departure; but when H.M.S. *Conway* arrived the Myowun dissuaded him from going, and he finally removed to the house by the water which Bayfield had occupied.

The position of foreigners in general was becoming more unpleasant. The Hlutdaw issued orders forbidding foreigners to buy land for houses or for business purposes without the King's express sanction; and further prohibited foreigners from owning Burmese slaves. In pursuance of this order, the Myowun redeemed many slaves belonging to European and Indian traders, including females who lived with foreigners. McLeod, while approving of the release of slaves, objected to the distinction which was thus made between Burmans and foreigners, but his protest was ineffective. The Myowun said that the King's orders must be obeyed, but observed that doubtless before long the reform would be forgotten and things would relapse into their former condition.

So far McLeod had found his relations with the Myowun satisfactory, but towards the end of the year difficulties arose. McLeod had promised a passage to Calcutta on the East Indiaman *Ganges* for one of the Myowun's followers, but the man was late in going aboard and the ship sailed without him. After this the Myowun behaved in a very uncivil manner. He made new regulations for the closing of the stockade gates at night, and when

[1] *India Political Consultations* 14th August, 1839, No. 49; 13th November, 1839, Nos. 53 — 56.
[2] Desai *op. cit.*

Lieutenant Rodney and other officers of the *Conway* who had been ashore wished to leave the town at 8-30 one evening they were stopped by the gatekeeper. Mr. R. S. Edwards, who was interpreter to the Residency, went to the Myowun and explained that the order that the gates should be closed at sunset had not been known to Rodney and his companions; but the Myowun was so abusive and threatening in his language that Edwards almost expected personal violence. Edwards at length managed to pacify the Myowun, who, however, while authorising the opening of the gate, ordered the gatekeeper to search the party, but Edwards dissuaded the guard from inflicting this humiliation on them.

Shortly after the Myowun demanded that McLeod should vacate the house in which he was living. This demand determined McLeod to leave Burma for good, and though when his determination was made known the Myowun again tried to persuade him to stay, even offering to build a new house for him, McLeod was not to be moved. On the 7th January 1840 he set sail; and from this time onwards there was no further official communication between the Government of India and the Burmese Government until the year 1851.

The British subjects of Rangoon did not follow McLeod's example. They had property in the town, and their means of livelihood lay there. But they no longer had the protection of the Residency, and appeals to the Government of India had little effect. The Indian Govenment had no intention of increasing its commitments in Burma, and merely informed the petitioners that "a private trader who thus ventures into an unfriendly post (? port) for his own profit does so at his own risk and cannot claim the interposition of his Government."[1] The Government of India, indeed, was not likely to have much sympathy with the troublesome type of trader who resided in Rangoon, especially as some of the British subjects there were more than suspected of habitually counterfeiting the old Madras rupee.

Though no Resident was maintained, a postal system was kept up. This was not actually an innovation. When Colonel Burney was at the capital, with no assistant in Rangoon, Mr. Spiers acted as agent for official letters and stores, though in an honorary capacity, from 1833 onwards. But after two or three years some difficulty of an unspecified nature arose between Burney and Spiers, and the agency was given to Messrs. Trill and Crisp, who later arranged that a protégé of theirs, J. Emmott, should be appointed Postmaster and Agent on a salary of Rs. 70 per mensem. On Burney's departure, however, as Bayfield remained in Rangoon in charge of the Residency, Emmott's appointment lapsed, and he went to Moulmein where he took employment in a shipyard. Again when it seemed probable that the Myowun would succeed in driving Bayfield away, he made a tentative arrangement for the revival of the Postmaster's office, proposing for the appointment a merchant named John Brown, whom he recommended because he seemed to get on well with

[1] *Tenasserim Correspondence* p. 100.

the Burmese officials and "kept aloof from local squabbles." This arrangement was not, however, brought into effect until Benson's departure from Burma, when Bayfield also left; McLeod remaining for the time at the capital, Brown was appointed Postmaster and became responsible for the forwarding of letters to the Residency. The jealousy which prevailed among the foreign merchants of Rangoon again showed itself in this connection, for May Flower Crisp and other merchants, though not Crisp's partner Trill, petitioned the Government of India for the reappointment of Emmott, but without success, for Colonel Benson regarded him as unsuited for appointment since he had formerly been "Master Attendant at Tavoy or Mergui, and lost the situation through intemperance, a habit of which I fear he has not entirely divested himself." Emmott asserted that Brown had been selected because he was a personal friend of Bayfield, but this was denied by Benson.[1]

Brown continued to hold his office for the transmission of private foreign correspondence after the final withdrawal of the Residency, and acted also as observer on behalf of the Government of India, sending reports about local conditions. His duties as postmaster were carried on under sufferance of the Burmese authorities, who not unnaturally placed restrictions on his performance of them. Thus at first the Akaukwun expressed his intention to forbid Brown to receive the merchants' letters;[2] and although this prohibition was not in fact enforced, Brown was forbidden to have communication with any ship after it had cleared the Custom House, and since no ship could clear after 4 p.m. it was impossible to send out letters after that hour; nor was he allowed to retain packages in his office overnight. This circumstance led to a curious order from the Postmaster General at Calcutta, who, on receipt of a complaint from the troublesome Crisp, instructed Brown to keep his office open until a quarter to six, apparently under the misapprehension that "Mr. Browne's (*sic*) office is a regular post office in British territory."[3] Brown appears to have died in the later '40's[4], and the duties of postmaster were performed from March 1848 onwards by Hugh Brown, presumably some member of his family.

Politically Rangoon had remained a backwater for some years following the war. When, however, the first shock of the disaster of 1826 had worn off, the Burmese Court began to ponder the possibility of regaining Burma irredenta, and for such a purpose Rangoon must clearly be the centre of military operations. Further, although King Bagyidaw was himself reluctant to consider the prospect of war, the troubles which continually occurred on the Tenasserim frontier, and which led to such episodes as the attack by a British force from Moulmein on the town of Martaban in 1829 as the only effective means of deterring the Martaban Myowun from encouraging dacoities

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[1] *India Political Consultations* 19th June, 1839, Nos. 39, 60, 61; 12th July, 1839, Nos. 52 — 55.
[2] *India Secret Consultations* 29th January, 1840, No. 68.
[3] *Tenasserim Correspondence* letter dated 6th January, 1843.
[4] See *Appendix C: The Crisp Family.*

on the Salween, seemed to suggest that war might occur at any time. Thus as early as 1832 there was much military activity in Rangoon. Burney, the Resident, wrote in that year, "I was struck upon my arrival here with the appearance of this town. The stockade has been rebuilt, the streets newly paved and improved, and from a thousand five hundred to two thousand men may be seen under arms four times a month with scarlet jackets and good muskets escorting the Woongyee to the Great Pagoda. In no part of the Empire, not in the Capital itself, have I observed so much military preparation on the part of the Government and so much speculation as to the probability of peace or war with the British Government on the part of the local officers as in this town, and I attribute this state of things as much to the constant disputes and jarring between Moulmein and Martaban as to the circumstance of our maintaining a steam vessel and an European regiment so immediately in this neighbourhood."[1] It is evident that for the moment Rangoon was again an important military centre. During Burney's Residency, however, relations improved; but when King Tharrawaddy ascended the throne in 1837 the situation again became precarious. While Tharrawaddy did not want war, he nevertheless wanted to be free of the restriction which he felt the presence of a Resident at the capital placed on his authority; and the princes of the royal house were enthusiastic for a war which should wipe out the disgrace of the previous defeat. These circumstances reacted on Rangoon.

The disturbances accompanying Tharrawaddy's usurpation of the throne had affected the town little; the Myowun made some attempt to put the stockade, which had evidently been again neglected, into a state of defence, and he mounted a few guns at the gateways. But the defences were in such poor condition that it was impossible to hold the Fort, and Tharrawaddy's men marched in without encountering any resistance; the Myowun was put in irons and sent to the capital. A rebellion which broke out in the province in January 1839, when a *minlaung*, who claimed to be the Sakya Min, the eldest son of the deposed King Bagyidaw, led an ineffective rising, was put down without difficulty, and by the beginning of the following month all was quiet. Rangoon was not affected by this émeute except in so far as it served as a base for troops, and on the 6th February it was reported that "Rangoon is becoming quiet; the military bustle has subsided, and the troops appear to have returned to their respective homes".[2] Dr. Bayfield endeavoured to persuade the Myowun to treat the prisoners taken in the rebellion with lenity, though with little success.

But though this rebellion was suppressed, the strained relations between the Burmese and the Indian Governments, and the continued bickering on the frontier, caused much uneasiness, and the casual visit of a British warship to the port was enough to create great alarm in the minds of the local officers.

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[1] *i.e.* at Moulmein.

[2] *India Secret Consultations* 8th May 1839, No. 25.

As early as December 1838 there was a concentration of troops in Rangoon; and when a pilot, Anthony by name, casually pointed out to some officers of the warship *Favourite* the details of the navigable channel of the River, he was cast into prison and fined Rs. 50, for the authorities were determined to prevent the communication to the foreigners of knowledge which would permit of unauthorised and unexpected entrance to the port.[1] Again in 1839 there was much talk in Rangoon of the possibility of an invasion by the British, not only Crisp but also a Muslim merchant, Mirza Mahomed Ali, informing the Myowun that the Government of India was about to take this step. The situation was so threatening, that the King actually made preparations for war. A force of seven thousand men was sent down to Rangoon from the capital, and the fortification of the Shwe Dagon hill was undertaken, though this measure languished for a time for want of bricks, even although the ruins of old pagodas were used for the purpose. McLeod noted that when the fortifications were ultimately completed they would constitute a formidable position. Muskets and ammunition were imported by the Burmese Government, largely from British ports in British ships; and the King got in touch with the French at Chandernagore and Pondichery. In July 1839 a party of Frenchmen arrived and went to the capital. They were private adventurers, but they were employed to build gun-boats for the King, and there was talk that they would lay mines at the mouth of the River; there was also a rumour that military instructors would be borrowed from Chandernagore. In this same year, 1839, a merchant of Rangoon wrote: "My Burmah friends appear anxious to know the probable line of policy which our Government may take. The efforts now making to render the big Pagoda a Military Post is both expensive and troublesome to the inhabitants". From this it may be concluded that every effort was being made to render the Pagoda a defensible position;[2] and still further changes were impending, for early in 1840 when an Indian merchant sought permission to erect a house within the Fort, he was informed "that the town was about to be removed towards the Pagoda". Again in October 1840 the postmaster Brown wrote that "a report is current that it is the intention of His Majesty to visit this Province about six months hence, preparatory to which one of the Woongyees is to be sent here in the course of the next two months to superintend the erection of a Palace. The reasons assigned for His Majesty's visit are said to be the fulfilment of a prophecy that a Palace will be built in the Province of Henzawady in the Burmhan year 1203 and to pay his respects to the Shooay Dagon Pagoda".[3] Again in this same month of October a party of Frenchmen arrived from Bourbon, and it was thought that they had some secret business with the King. In November it was stated

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[1] *India Political Consultations* 13th February, 1839, No. 72.
[2] *ibid.* 17th July, 1839, No. 54.
[3] *ibid.* 9th November, 1840, No. 160.

that "a stockade is now in progress of erection at a place cleared of jungle by the Woondouk when here, to serve, it is said, as a defence to the palace that is to be built. Other reports state that the town is to be wholly removed to that place"[1]; and in December Brown noted that "great activity has been shown in clearing away the jungle to afford space for the Palace, and the forces that are to accompany His Majesty on his visit to this place will amount, it is said, to a hundred thousand men".[2]

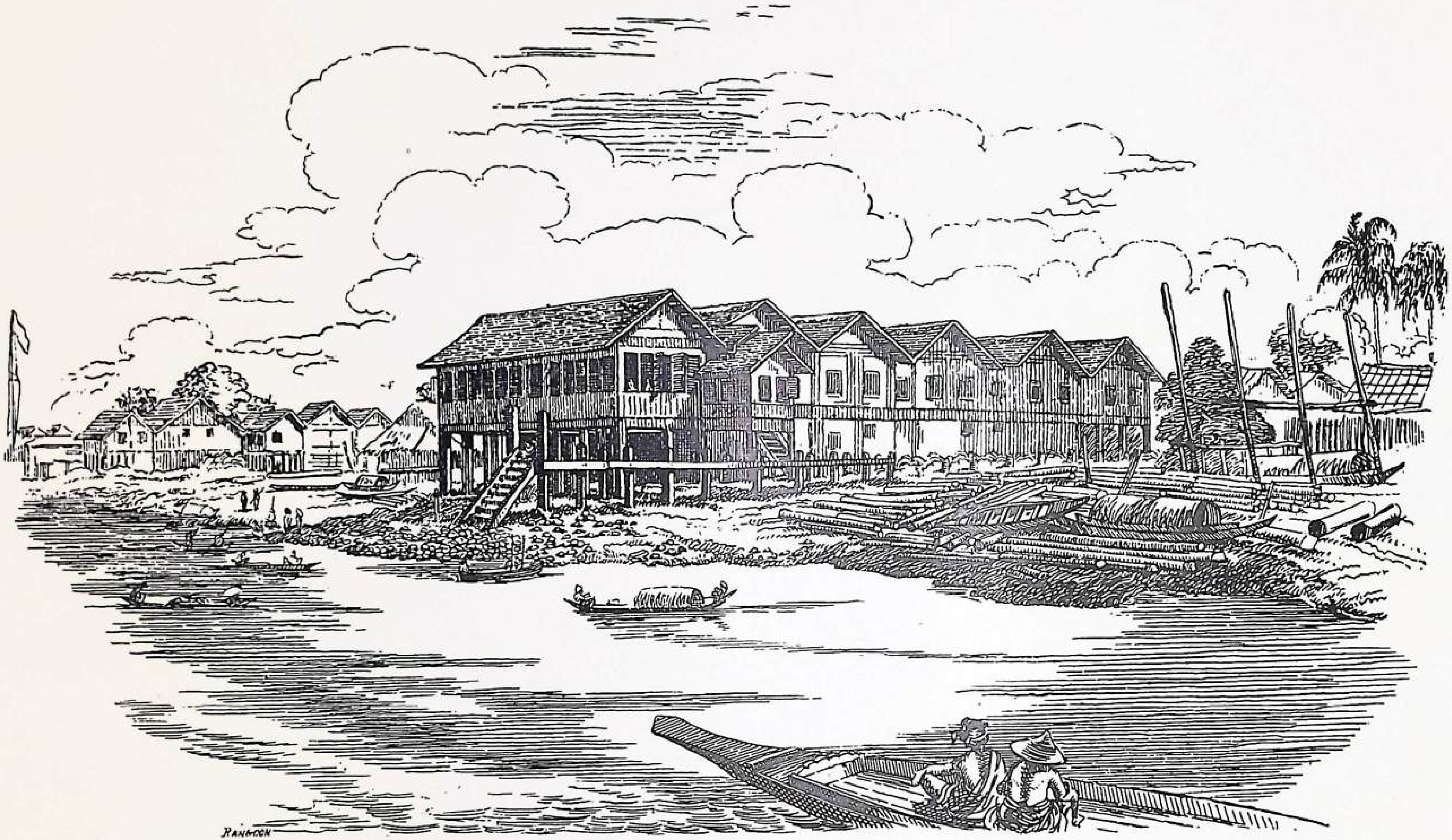
On the 8th February 1841, a disastrous fire occurred which destroyed many houses and a part of the stockade around the Fort, but no attempt was made to restore the defences. "The portion of the stockade then burnt down remains in that state and I am not aware of orders regarding it having yet arrived", Brown reported. "The impression that the town might be entirely removed by order from Court has hitherto deterred many from rebuilding their houses, and intelligence has just been received that orders are on the way to the effect that the houses which were burnt are only to be repaired in a temporary manner in order that the loss to the owners may not be so great in the event of the removal of the town, of the propriety of which measure His Majesty will judge when he arrives here. The house for the reception of His Majesty is approaching completion, though after it is finished there will be much to be done in the shape of outer fences and offices, besides the houses that will be necessary for the accommodation of the Princes, all of whom it is reported will accompany His Majesty, and other officers of Government, so that the whole cannot, I think, be finished before the commencement of the rains".[3]

The King's intention to visit Rangoon was again reported in June, when it was said that he was about to come in state with forty thousand troops, and that the royal progress was further to be graced by the presence of "the White Elephant and the Chief Priest". In addition to the accommodation that was being erected for the King himself, barracks for the troops were now being provided. By September the number of soldiers who were to accompany him was reported at seventy thousand, and it was rumoured that the purpose of assembling this army was to make an attempt to recover the lost provinces; colour was given to this report by the fact that "a Woondouk has arrived here with orders to build several large vessels and more than twenty boats of 2½ cubits beam and 30 cubits long, to be without masts"[4].

Naturally there was much excitement in Rangoon, and much talk of the reasons for the King's journey. More prophecies were quoted in explanation; one was to the effect that the dynasty of Alaungpaya would not extend beyond seven kings; Tharrawaddy was the seventh, and it was suggested that he intended to be crowned as King of Pegu and so fulfill the prophecy

[1] *ibid.* 9th November, 1840, No. 160; 14th December, 1840, No. 100.
[2] *ibid.* 18th January, 1841, No. 76.
[3] *India Secret Consultations* 12th April, 1841, No. 145.
[4] *ibid.* 11th October, 1841, Nos. 124, 93

PLATE No. 14



Grant: Rough Pencillings of a Rough Trip to Rangoon.

RESIDENCE OF G. S. MANOOK, Esq., 1846.

by founding a new dynasty. Another prophecy was to the effect that a Prince would appear in Pegu in the year 1203 B. E. (1841-2 A.D.): perhaps, it was thought, the King intended to anticipate the appearance of any more pretenders by appearing himself. A third prophecy stated that the year 1203 would see much fighting, and this lent colour to the rumours of an impending attack on Tenasserim and Arakan. In Moulmein this last explanation was considered the most plausible; it was known that the King regarded the rise of Moulmein with a jealous eye and would be glad to destroy it and thus restore Rangoon to its former pride of place among the ports of Burma. An alternative explanation was that he hoped to achieve the same end by making Rangoon his residence for a time, so increasing its popularity and its trade.

The king actually set out from Amarapura in September, and he reached Rangoon on the 2nd October. He had with him, however, only about fifteen thousand men plus a further eight or ten thousand distributed in the province, and it was soon apparent that war was not his intention. Tharrawaddy did indeed desire to restore the importance of Rangoon; possibly he did envisage making it some day a base for an attack on the lost territories; and his sons publicly boasted that they were one day going to retrieve the disgrace of the last war. But for the time being the King's policy was one of peace. Realising, however, that war in the Delta would some day occur, he wanted to take precautions to prevent the disaster of 1824 so far as possible. It had been established by the events of that year that Alaungpaya's Rangoon, close to the River, could not be defended against an invader coming from the sea. It was useless to attempt to restore the defences of the town which had quite properly been allowed to fall into decay once more. A new town in a stronger position, out of range from the River, guarded by fortifications not easily taken, was called for. Thus was built Tharrawaddy's Rangoon, the plans for which had evidently been under consideration as early as 1839 when the fortification of the Pagoda was taken in hand.

So the troops which the King had brought were utilised, not in fighting, but in fortifying a new town; and the King announced that when this work was completed he would return to Upper Burma. Nevertheless the period of his residence in Rangoon was one of political strain. The commander of one of the Company's ships, the armed steamer *Proserpine*, which brought letters to Rangoon in the November, was treated with discourtesy: he was kept in confinement in the Custom House and released only on the intervention of the merchant Captain Spiers; while the interpreter whom he sent ashore with the letters was escorted to the Myowun's house and not allowed to communicate with any of the inhabitants of the town. Also, in defiance of the treaties, a monopoly in timber was established, presumably to secure an adequate supply for the construction of the new town, and the shipbuilding yard of Messrs. Crisp and Co. was sequestrated and used for the construction

of ships for the King. However, no rupture of relationships occurred. The King stayed in Rangoon until January, and, in addition to determining the site of the new city, he devoted much of his time to works of devotion. He had the Shwe Dagon regilt, and he made gifts of gold and silver bells to it. He also ordered the casting of a great bell of bronze, of height 9½ cubits, of diameter 5 cubits, and thickness of metal 15 inches. On information received from a Pagoda slave, a search was made for a Maha Bodhi tree, said to have been brought in a previous age from Ceylon; and the tree was discovered at the north-west of the Pagoda, where a *thein* was therefore consecrated.

In January 1842, on the 22nd of the month, the King departed from Rangoon for the capital, leaving orders for the continuance of the work on the new town. In August it was reported that he was about to return to superintend the casting of his bell; but cholera broke out in the villages along the Irrawaddy, and spread to Rangoon; the epidemic was unprecedented in its severity; the King's journey was postponed, and indeed never took place.

Tharrawaddy's object, however, was to a large extent already accomplished. A completely new city was established, standing well away from the River, with the Shwe Dagon Hill as its citadel.[1] This new city, called *Aung mye aung hnin,* and also sometimes known as Ukkalapa after the traditional kingdom of ancient days, covered approximately the area now known as the Cantonments.

As with Alaungpaya's Rangoon, few vestiges remain today, and it is far from easy to trace the site. The town is described as having been sited "about a mile and a quarter from the river; it is nearly a square, with a *bund* or mud-wall about sixteen feet high and eight broad; a ditch runs along each side of the square, and on the north side, where the pagoda stands, it has been cleverly worked into the defences, to which it forms a sort of citadel. The distance from the pagoda to the entrance of the town is about three-quarters of a mile, and it is something more than that breadth from east to west. The old road from the river to the pagoda, comes up to the South Gate running through the new town."[2] The description of the town as a square is misleading, for at the north-west a salient of considerable size ran out at a point where there had formerly been an old fort which was now worked into the new system of defence.[3] The Shwe Dagon formed the north-east corner of the town; the eastern face ran along the top of the ridge slightly eastwards of Signal Pagoda Road of today, and the southern face ran parallel to and slightly south of Simpson's Road, turned southwards to the east of and parallel to Pagoda Road, and then turned westwards again and ran, though not in an entirely straight line, south of the Jubilee Hall site, across the existing *maidan,* and beyond Godwin Road nearly to Budd Road; the western side ran eastwards of Budd Road up to the Military

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[1] See Map V.
[2] Baker: *Recent Operations of the British Forces at Rangoon and Martaban* p. 67.
[3] *India Secret Consultations* 10th January, 1842, No. 56.

Police buildings at the south-west of the Prome Road Golf Course; and the salient ran out across the Golf Course and beyond the Prome Road. The north face similarly cut across Prome Road and the Golf Course to the Pagoda, and the remains of the *bund* on this side can be seen today,[1] as also the remnants of the *bund* at the western extremity of the salient. The principal roads were a continuation of the old Great Pagoda Road, running up to the Shwe Dagon to the east of modern China Street and then on the line of modern Pagoda Road; the great Lanmadaw, the new King's Main Road which was now constructed on the line of modern Godwin Road, running from the new King's Wharf which Tharrawaddy built by the waterside, up to the western entrance of the Pagoda; and the old Wungyi's Road, running to the Pagoda on the line of Signal Pagoda Road. There were other, internal roads, one of which approximated to Voyle Road, and another to East Bazaar Road, but most of which do not appear to coincide with any of the roads of today. The principal buildings were the *Myenanaunggya*—the palace of Tharrawaddy Min, standing on a site on the modern *maidan* west of the Jubilee Hall, though this Palace was pulled down as soon as the King left Rangoon;[2] and the Myowun's residence which stood south of the present Cantonment Church. There were numerous kyaungs and pagodas within the city, such as the Eindawya Pagoda which still stands near Bishopscourt. Numerous barracks for troops stood within and close to the *bund* on the west and south sides. There were a number of tanks and swamps in the lower-lying parts which have become the tanks in and to the south of the Cantonment Gardens. The water supply was, however, provided by thirty wells which the King caused to be dug.[3] The town had thirteen gates: on the north, the North or Myeni Gate, leading to Myenigon; on the east, the Leik khin Gate where the road now runs down from the Pagoda to the Royal Lakes, the Sin su Gate, and the Kandawgale Gate; on the south the Panbedan or Smith's Gate, also known as the Kyagu Gate, the South Gate, the Nyaungbin or Banyan Tree Gate, and the Thingyo or Thitnyo Gate; on the west, the Wetsu Gate, the Shin Sawbu Gate, the Matha Gate, and two others whose names are uncertain,[4] Little information is available about Tharrawaddy's town, however; it was short-lived, and during the brief period of ten years that it existed, was visited by few who cared to describe it. It was doubtless much like other Burmese towns of the day, with roughly paved streets, wooden or bamboo houses, and few amenities. "Everything is commonplace", it was said;[5] "long, narrow streets, closely packed with houses on each side; no signs of municipal government, or of the Sewers Commissioners having visited the spot for many a long day".

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[1] But see above p. 23.

[2] *India Secret Consultations* 4th March, 1842, No. 53.

[3] *ibid.* 10th January, 1842, No. 56.

[4] The names of the gates as given in Laurie: *Second Burmese War* (Rangoon) p. 108 and Thein: *Rangoon in 1852*, do not tally; Thein has been followed here.

[5] Laurie *op. cit.*, p. 141.

The town was to be surrounded by an earthen *bund* with a timber stockade on top; but though the *bund* had been completed by the end of Tharrawaddy's reign, the stockade had not, and since no one was particularly concerned to finish the work, the new city remained for some years in a defenceless condition, with only the *bund* and the gateways to guard it. It was for this reason sometimes referred to as "the mud fort."[1]

The Yondaw and the residences of the officials were removed to the new town, and it was originally intended that the population of Rangoon as a whole should follow them. As early as December 1841 it was reported that "orders are out for all Burmese appertaining to the Militia, of which four houses support one musketeer, to remove into the new town of Ook-a-la-bau", and by the end of that month houses were already being pulled down and removed there. By March there were few Burmese houses left in the old town, and on the 27th of the month a fire which broke out in the Chinese quarter in Tatgale destroyed what were left. The only Burmans now remaining in the place were the Custom House staff, and it was rumoured that they also were shortly to be removed. These circumstances caused a good deal of alarm to the foreign mercantile community. At first they had been perturbed at the prospect of the heavy loss which would be involved in demolishing and rebuilding elsewhere their houses and godowns; but in January orders had been issued that the foreign merchants were to remain in their existing quarters. The fear then entered their minds that, apart from the inconvenience to business which would ensue from the Custom House being in the new town while they themselves remained in the old town, they would in addition be exposed to grave danger, since they would be left "isolated at the mercy of thieves". Even while the King was in residence, it was complained that "robberies and murders are daily occurrences in our neighbourhood", and the prospect of continuing to reside by the River without the protection of any officials at all was not attractive.[2] They began to wonder whether the object of the Burmese Government was not to render their position so precarious as to leave them no option but to leave the country. The continuance of the timber monopoly, which was applied in a discriminatory manner, seemed to point to the same conclusion.

However, in the upshot old Rangoon was by no means completely abandoned. It continued to be a populous place, for the commerce and industry of the port were still situated there, and all those connected with trade and the shipyards, and that would be a considerable part of the population, seem gradually to have returned. Europeans, indeed, appear not only to have been allowed to retain their houses and godowns in the old town, but also to have been definitely excluded from the new town unless they had business with the officials. Old Rangoon was "the only spot in which foreigners are allowed to

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[1] *India Secret Consultations* 10th January, 1842, No. 56.

[2] *ibid.* 10th January, 1842, No. 56; 24th January, 1842, No. 37; 14th February, 1842, No. 58; 8th April, 1842, No. 67.

reside,"[1] and the approach of a foreigner to the new town was regarded with a jealous eye, an innocent attempt at making sketches of the place resulting in immediate arrest on the charge of espionage[2]. The *bund* around the town, moreover, was more or less sacred, it is said, though probably it was military rather than religious considerations that led to the exclusion of foreigners from it. So Alaungpaya's Rangoon continued to be the business town. The stockade, however, was removed by Tharrawaddy's orders, and only the gateways with their massive brick pillars remained[3]. In other respects old Rangoon remained much what it had been before, except that it continued to decay. In 1846 it was described as "suggestive only of the utmost meanness and poverty." The old King's Wharf, however, had by that date been repaired and a crane had been placed there once more; it was now "a somewhat rude but massive pier, with huge posts, to which a crane is attached at the outer extremity." The Custom House Wharf, as it came to be known after Tharrawaddy built his new King's Wharf at Lanmadaw, continued to be the meeting-place of the mercantile community, and was sometimes called the "Exchange" or "Gossip" Wharf[4]. The old battery continued to stand, with the flagstaff near by, and not far away the "plain wooden spire of the Armenian church" was still to be seen. The town was, however, sadly neglected in regard to public amenities. It was "more dismantled and desolate than ever"[5]; houses which partially collapsed were not rebuilt,[6] and the brick paving of the streets, like that of the roads leading to the new town, fell into disrepair; so that in some places all trace of the paving had disappeared. Even the Lanmadaw was only "a narrow pathway of bricks laid on edge, intended only for foot passengers".[7] The outbreak of crime which had accompanied the founding of the new town continued, the destruction of the stockade being a great encouragement to dacoity. Navigation of the River also became more difficult, for, with that express design, Tharrawaddy had caused the grove of palm-trees, whose peculiar appearance gave the name to Elephant Point and which served as a landmark for sailors, to be cut down.[8]

Tharrawaddy's visit to Rangoon had given a momentary impetus to trade, as he had very likely intended, and at the Fair which occurred shortly after his departure it was noticed that many more Shans had come to Rangoon than had been the case for some time. But thereafter trade appears to have declined once more. In October 1842 the Postmaster reported that as a result of the high price of timber produced by the monopoly "only one native vessel from the Madras coast has yet arrived at the port this season. The

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[1] Wayland *op. cit.*, II. 272.
[2] Grant *op. cit.*, p. 44.
[3] See Plate No. 13 — *The Yodega Gateway*, showing the gate in ruins.
[4] Grant *op. cit.*, p. 27. See Plate No. 14 — *The Residence of G. S. Manook, Esq.* showing the waterfront after the removal of the stockade. Compare No. 2 showing the same view with the stockade, and No. 34 showing the waterfront in 1938.
[5] Wayland *op. cit.*, II. 272.
[6] Grant *op. cit.*, p. 24.
[7] *Our Monthly* III, 462.
[8] Bennett *op. cit.*

usual number of these vessels annually is fifteen."[1] Although in 1844 the monopoly was abandoned, other circumstances militated against a flourishing commerce. There were constant robberies which destroyed confidence in the safety of life and property, and little was done to prevent or to penalise such misdeeds. "Several daring robberies have been committed here within the last few days and four people shot by the robbers when resisting them", Brown reported. "The authorities appear to have taken little notice of their doings as they have taken no steps either to put a stop to them or for their apprehension"[2]. It was, indeed, said that certain high officials, including the Myowun himself, were the instigators of these dacoities, for confessions to that effect were made by some robbers who had been apprehended, but the value of these confessions was slight "as they were nearly all extorted by severe flogging, so severe in one instance that one man died shortly after it".[3] The attitude of some of the officials towards the foreign merchants continued to be another obstacle to a flourishing trade. Interference with the foreign mails recurred; and even more serious impediments to commerce seemed likely at one time to be introduced, for a newly appointed Akaukwun advanced the proposal that all ships entering the port should be required to unship their rudders and land their sails and guns as in former days; but the Myowun rejected the suggestion, not because this practice was prohibited by the Treaties, but because it was now the established custom that such a demand should not be made.[4]

Complaints of oppressive and arbitrary actions on the part of the local officials continued to reach the Government of India in this period. But in truth the foreign merchants in Rangoon were still as troublesome as ever, and their conduct was such as to cause just irritation in the mind of not only the Burmese Government but also the Government of India. The irrepressible May Flower Crisp was as ever to the fore in causing trouble. In 1843 he wrote a letter to a Calcutta newspaper commenting on the political situation in Burma in such terms that, when the matter was brought to the King's notice, he issued an order for him to appear before the Myowun to answer for his conduct. Crisp was at the time in Moulmein, but his son, Charles Malcolm Crisp, who was in charge of the firm's business in Rangoon, was compelled to become surety for his father's appearance within forty days on pain of being himself expelled from the King's dominions. Crisp failed to satisfy the authorities, and was formally expelled; though his son was apparently permitted to remain in Rangoon and to carry on business there. In July 1847 Crisp returned to Rangoon in the hope of obtaining a reversal of the order of expulsion; and while in the town he took it upon himself to approach the Myowun with a suggestion that the Residency should be re-established; and

[1] *India Secret Consultations* 7th December, 1842, No. 98.
[2] *ibid.* 28th August, 1847, No. 255.
[3] *ibid.* No. 256.
[4] *India Secret Consultations* 28th April, 1848, No. 120.

finding the Myowun well disposed, he addressed the Government of India on the subject, optimistically suggesting that if "state economy or expediency interfere with the appointment of the Resident, in that event I submit that an honorary acting Resident might be appointed as the next step towards the gradual enforcement of our Treaties and which office I would respectfully solicit for my son, Charles Malcolm Crisp, of course tendering my own services to Government should Government deem me better qualified to perform the functions of that important office." Crisp was doomed to disappointment, however, for the Government of India merely directed him to "desist from taking any steps or adopting any kind of proceedings which would lead to the false impression that you are an accredited agent of the British Government," while the Burmese Government refused to reverse its sentence of expulsion and by March 1848 he had had to return to Moulmein. He spent three days in jail during his stay in Rangoon, "as he would not pay some money they demanded of him, but ultimately he was obliged to comply with all their demands."[1] He was, however, back in Rangoon in 1851.

Whatever the justification for the attitude of the local government towards the foreigners, it remains that trade declined rapidly during the 1840's. In 1848 the Postmaster reported that "from the beginning of this year the imports of British goods from Calcutta are not one third of what they were in the same number of months of late years;"[2] and in January 1849 he stated that "this is no longer a place for a merchant (that can leave it) to reside in because of the many arbitrary acts of the Government. They seem to have thrown the Commercial Treaty aside altogether."[3] Again in February of that year he observed, "I cannot say whether it is by the orders of the Government or whether it is the local officers own doings that they oppress and harry us merchants in the way they do, but they do so and throw every obstacle they can in the way of our transacting our lawful business."[4] Brown frequently urged upon the Government of India the necessity of extending some degree of protection towards the British nationals living in Rangoon, for, in his view, if such protection were not given "the trade must in a great measure cease, and were it to do so, I believe that it would be most sensibly felt in Calcutta and especially by those houses of business connected with Manchester and Glasgow."[5]

The Myowun at the end of the '40's, by name Maung Ok, was even more arbitrary than his predecessors. According to rumour, he was habitually guilty of receiving bribes, and "it was his constant practice to send his private friends, men who bore bad characters, about the town to excite

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[1] *India Secret Consultations* 21st June, 1843, No. 31; 31st March, 1848, No. 143; 28th April, 1848, No. 120.
[2] *ibid.* 30th September, 1848, No. 80.
[3] *ibid.* 27th January, 1849, No. 79.
[4] *ibid.* 31st March, 1849, No. 47.
[5] *ibid.* 28th April, 1848, No. 120.

quarrels among the rich and respectable, and cause them to be brought up before him and accused, in order that he might persecute them till they paid handsomely for their release. He had from twenty to thirty concubines. Whenever he took a fancy to a young maiden, and her parents refused to give her to him, he would immediately accuse them upon some frivolous charge such as having glass windows to their house, the house being built like a Palace, or that they had a gold bedstead in it, etc., and would confine them until they acceded to his wishes." He also, it was said, oppressed his people by excessive taxation, and imposed unlawful exactions upon shipping.[1] But whether this picture of the Myowun's character is a just one is open to doubt; for though he took extraordinary measures to obtain money, there is authority for believing that he wanted the money for the execution of pious deeds, since a visitor to Rangoon in 1852 recorded that he had visited "the new Pagoda, for building which the late Governor is said to have extorted money and so given rise to the war."[2]

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CHAPTER EIGHT

THE WAR OF 1852.

IN June 1851 the 250-ton barque *Monarch*, Captain Robert Sheppard, came into Rangoon from Moulmein. On the second day after her arrival a complaint was preferred before the Myowun by a Chittagonian named Hajim, who asserted that during the voyage his brother Esoph, a pilot, had been thrown overboard by the Captain and had been drowned. The Myowun ordered the arrest of Sheppard, who defended himself with the statement that the pilot had run the ship aground and then, being terrified of drowning, had jumped overboard of his own accord and succeeded with the aid of a piece of timber in reaching the shore. The defence was not accepted and Sheppard was convicted. One of his crew, it was said, was beaten to force him to give evidence against his captain. Sheppard was detained under arrest until security had been given by some of the merchants of the town; and when security had been given he was required to pay a heavy fine. A further charge was then brought against him by yet another Chittagonian, Dewan Ali, who also claimed to be a brother of the pilot. The complaint this time was that Hajim had had five hundred rupees with him and that this sum was now missing. Though acquitted by a panel of assessors, Sheppard was further mulcted in this sum, and had in all to pay Rs. 1,005. He reported the matter to the Commissioner, Tennasserim Division, and made a claim against the Burmese Government for the loss incurred in respect of the fines and of the delay of eight days to which his ship had been subjected.

Two months later, in August, the *Champion*, a 410-ton ship, arrived from Mauritius, and the captain, Harold Lewis, was charged with the murder of one of his lascars who, according to Lewis himself, had died a natural death shortly before the vessel reached Rangoon. The charge was made by two Bengali coolies who had stowed away on the ship, and was supported by some of the crew, who deserted and made an appeal to the Burmese authorities for the recovery of their wages. Lewis like Sheppard, was arrested, and was able to secure his release only on payment of a fine of Rs. 700. He likewise made a complaint, this time to the Governor-General's Council in Calcutta.

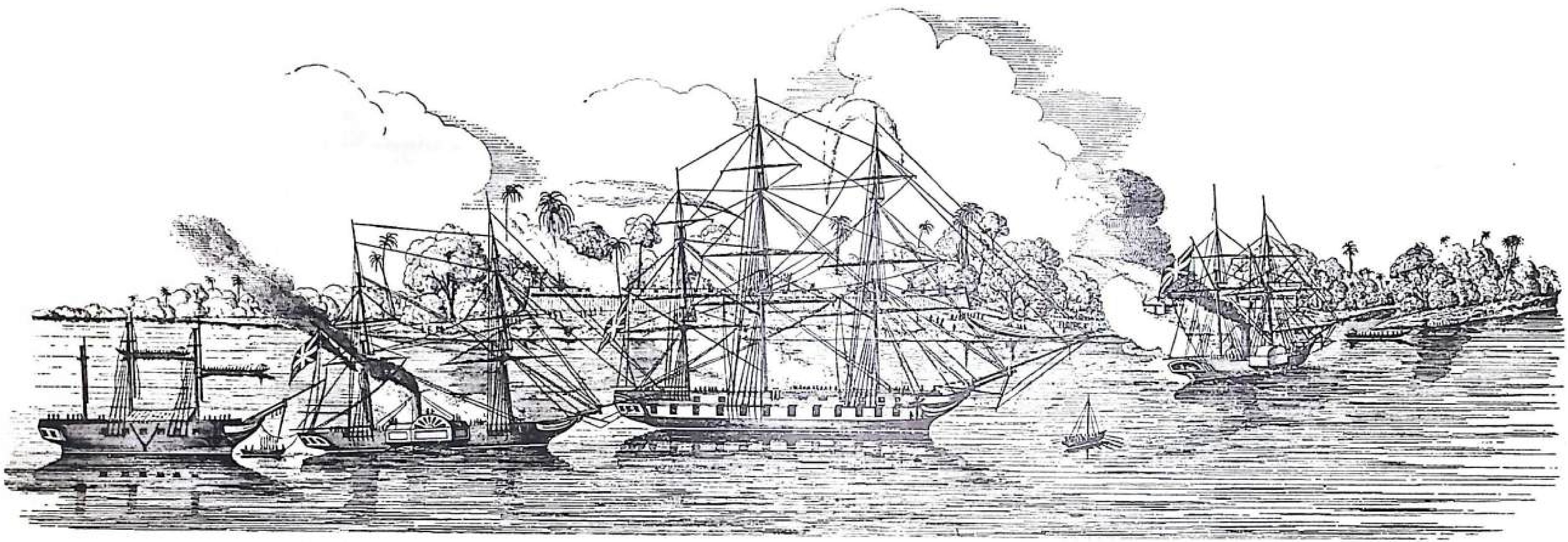
In the past the Company's Government had taken the view that British subjects who traded to Burma did so at their own risk; but Lord Dalhousie, now Governor-General, was disposed to adopt a different policy, although at the same time he had no desire for a rupture of relations with the Burmese Government. An enquiry was held by his order, and the damages, which Sheppard and Lewis had assessed at Rs. 19,200, were cut down to a total of Rs. 9,200. Commodore G. R. Lambert, in H. M. S. *Fox*, was then ordered

to Rangoon with the Company's war-steamers *Tenasserim*, Captain Dicey, and *Proserpine*, Captain Brooking, to demand reparation. Captain Thomas Latter, 67th Bengal N.I., and Mr. R. S. Edwards attended as interpreters. The Commodore's instructions were that in the event of failure on the part of the Myowun to make redress, the Burmese King was to be addressed by letter.

The Commodore arrived in the port on the 25th November, and was at once approached by some of the foreign merchants who stated their grievances, which they subsequently put in writing, complaining that instances of injustice and oppression were "of daily occurrence" and that the least protest was liable to involve heavy punishment. It appears that the first of these complainants to board the ship was May Flower Crisp, now, as ever, in trouble. Troublesome though he was, he cannot but be admired for his effrontery. "That man," stated Lord Ellenborough, "as soon as he knew of the probability of a war, freighted a schooner with arms and sold them to the Governor of Rangoon. When the Governor refused payment for them he had the effrontery to go to Commodore Lambert and complain of the injury inflicted upon him ..... The Governor of Rangoon offered in consequence £ 100 for that man's head, and I confess I should not have been deeply grieved if he had got it."[1] The Myowun, learning of the action of Crisp and others, forbade any further communication between the inhabitants of Rangoon and the warships; and, probably alarmed at the anchoring of the *Fox* close to the old town, required her to be removed to the position assigned to mercantile shipping. On the 27th a letter addressed to the Myowun was taken ashore by Captain Latter and another officer; these officers went to the new town to the Myowun's residence, and there, they complained, they were received with incivility, for they were kept waiting and when the Myowun did at length appear he was dressed in his shabbiest clothes and was smoking a cheroot. The letter, which was read aloud first in English and then in Burmese in the presence of the Myowun and of the European merchants who had been summoned to attend, stated that in view of the complaints received from the merchants, the reparation which was to have been demanded was clearly inadequate and that therefore further orders from the Governor-General would be sought. The Myowun was naturally disturbed at the unpleasant situation which had arisen, and showed himself anxious to be conciliatory; but the officers refused to hold any further conversation with him and returned to their ship. The next day a number of officials visited the Commodore to assure him that any acts of injustice which might have occurred had been indulged in without the Myowun's knowledge; but they were given in return a letter addressed to the King seeking the removal of the Myowun from his office. The *Proserpine* was then sent to Calcutta to report the situation.

[1] House of Lords, 5th April, 1852.

PLATE No. 15



Baker: Recent Operations of the British Forces at Rangoon.

THE ATTACK OF THE DUNNOO STOCKADE

The Myowun assembled a force said to have numbered ten thousand men, and armed one of the King's ships which was lying in the port. The troops so assembled, it was complained, received no pay and were dependent on robbery for their food; and in view of this and of the generally alarming nature of the situation, the European inhabitants assembled at the house of a merchant named Birrell, who erected a bamboo flagstaff on the roof so that he might communicate by signals with the warships, and also placed a small two-pounder cannon on the landing of the house. The Myowun regarded these acts, quite properly, as breaches of the law, and insisted on the removal of both flagstaff and cannon. At the same time, the situation of the foreigners was certainly precarious; the Burmese soldiers, it is said, frequently threatened the English residents with their muskets, and an American missionary, Kincaid, suffered ill-treatment while going to visit the ship where his family had taken refuge.

It seemed, however, as if an outbreak of war would be avoided, for the King's reply to the letter of complaint was pacific and conciliatory, expressing hope that there would be no breach of friendship and announcing the removal of the Myowun. On the 4th January 1852 the new Myowun arrived, and though the old Myowun was given a triumphal farewell, when Edwards was sent on the following day to enquire when it would be convenient for a statement of the claims for reparation to be brought, he was well received; the Myowun expressed his willingness to receive a communication next day and further showed his anxiety to be friendly by removing the embargo on communication between the town and the warships.

On the 6th, therefore, a deputation consisting of Captain Fishbourne of the steam-sloop *Hermes*, Captain Latter, and two other officers, went to the new town bearing a letter asking for a settlement of the claims and proposing the re-establishment of the Residency. The outcome of this deputation was most unfortunate. Edwards went ahead to give notice of their approach, but when he reached the Myowun's house, "at the foot of the outer steps, one of the Governor's suite drew his dagger on him, and threateningly asked him how he dared thus approach the Governor's house." Edwards, on being admitted, informed the Myowun of this occurrence, whereupon "the Governor sent for the offender, and punished him in the presence of Mr. Edwards in the usual Burmese manner, namely, by having him taken by the hair of the head, swung round three times, his face dashed to the ground, himself dragged by the hair and pitched downstairs." When, however, Edwards said that the deputation of officers was approaching, the Myowun showed himself unwilling to receive them, for he had expected that the Commodore would come in person. In the absence of the Commodore he was prepared to accept any communication brought by Edwards, whose rank was definitely inferior to his own; but was reluctant to grant an interview to officers who, though his inferiors from the Burmese point of view, regarded themselves as his equals and would behave accordingly. He was, he told Edwards, afraid

that they might "behave discourteously, and not according to the rules of etiquette"; that is to say, he feared that his *awza* or authority would be diminished in the eyes of his people.

Meanwhile the officers had borrowed horses for the two mile journey from the River bank, and arrived in the new town at about midday. When they reached the Myowun's residence they were requested to dismount outside the compound, but, ignorant of Burmese practice, and assured by Captain Latter that this request was intended as a deliberate insult, they took offence and insisted on riding in. This behaviour apparently hardened the Myowun's determination not to receive them and they were informed that he was asleep, though at the same time Edwards was again informed that the Myowun was willing to receive a communication through him. While this argument was going on, the officers were invited to "go and stand under the shed, the place where the common people usually assembled"; but seeing in this a further insult they refused, and after waiting for some time in the sun they returned to report to the Commodore.

"This conduct," says a contemporary writer,[1] "left no room for doubt on the score of the tone the new Governor intended to adopt," and it was in this spirit that the Commodore acted when he was informed what had happened. In reality, however, the Myowun had, so far as can be seen, no desire for a breach of relations; just as Lambert's officers did not realise that they had committed a breach of good manners by riding into the Myowun's compound, so equally the Myowun, who had had no previous experience of dealing with foreigners, did not realise that no offence had been intended; and in declining to receive the deputation he forgot that Lambert had received in person every official, of whatever rank, that had come to his ship. Thus through a misunderstanding on both sides the situation was made acute. Lambert, moreover, was misled by the fact that the Myowun had brought a body of troops to Rangoon with him; this was a natural precaution in view of the diplomatic situation and did not indicate any desire to commence hostilities.

Thinking the Burmese intent on war, Lambert forthwith proclaimed a blockade of "the rivers of Rangoon, the Bassein, and the Salween above Maulmain"; and ordered all British subjects in Rangoon to embark and all British ships to drop below the Hastings. The British inhabitants were embarked by the boats of the squadron under cover of the *Proserpine;* the *Hermes* was employed in towing the merchant vessels away and also, more remarkably, in towing away the King's ship, which the late Myowun had caused to be armed. The *Fox* and the other warships now anchored below the Hastings. Next day the Dalla Myowun came to Lambert's frigate with a view to securing the restoration of the King's ship, but this was refused, and

[1] Baker *op. cit.*, p. 9.

he was told that only an apology by the Myowun in person on the deck of the frigate would be accepted. The following day, the 8th, other officials arrived to seek an accommodation. They bore a letter from the Myowun explaining his refusal to receive any communication through anyone except Edwards on the ground that in the first place he had expected the Commodore to come himself, and that in the second place the officers had misbehaved. "Four inferior officers," he wrote, "an American clergyman named Kincaid, and the interpreter Edwards, came in a state of intoxication, and, contrary to custom, entered the compound on horseback; and whilst I was asleep, and the Deputy-Governor was waking me, used violent and abusive language. They then went away, and conveyed an irritating message to the Commodore; and that officer, listening to their improper and unbecoming representations, and with a manifest inclination to implicate the two nations in war, on the 6th of January, 1852, at night, with secrecy, took away the ship belonging to His Majesty the King of Ava". This communication was not likely to improve relations, and the Commodore replied by giving the Myowun till 6 p.m. to accept the terms offered. But, instead, in the evening a number of warboats went down the River to warn the guard-posts which lay on the River banks, and later a message was received that the stockades at the guard-posts would open fire if any ships attempted to move downstream. On the 9th morning the *Proserpine* and the *Phlegethon*, which had now joined the squadron together with H.M.S. *Serpent*, convoyed a number of merchantmen out to sea, the *Proserpine* then to go to Moulmein and thence to Calcutta to report. The *Phlegethon* on her return stated that the stockades were fully manned. Next day, the 10th January, the *Hermes* took the *Fox* in tow and brought her down as far as the Danot guardpost, while the *Phlegethon* remained at the Hastings to guard the King's ship and the merchantmen which were still there. The *Hermes* returned to the Hastings to bring the King's ship down, and when she arrived off the guard-post with the ship in tow, the battery there opened fire. The *Fox* and *Hermes* replied, the *Phlegethon* came down and also opened fire, and within a short time the battery was silenced. A landing party then destroyed the warboats moored off the stockade and spiked the guns of the battery and threw them into the water.[1] A battery which commenced firing from the old Chokey on the other bank of the River, near Thilawa, was also soon silenced. The *Fox* dropped down to the mouth of the River where the *Serpent* already lay, and on the following morning the rest of the squadron, together with the King's ship, joined them. Two days later Lambert sailed in the *Hermes* for Calcutta to obtain further instructions from the Governor-General. It is significant that the Burmese stockades had not opened fire until the *Hermes* came down with the King's ship in tow. It may also be noted that the Commodore had had explicit instructions from the Governor-General "that

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[1] See Plate No. 15 — *The Attack of the Dunnoo Stockade.*

no act of hostility is to be committed at present, though the reply of the Governor should be unfavourable, nor until definite instructions regarding such hostilities shall be given by the Government of India."

Before Lambert's departure news had arrived which showed that the Burmese Government had no desire for war; on Monday the 11th a communication was received from the Myowun promising everything that had been demanded if the King's ship were returned. But the Commodore realised that the situation had passed beyond his authority. Indeed, war had now become almost inevitable. It is plain that the business had been mishandled. Lambert had from the start been influenced by the complaints of the local merchants, whose views could hardly be unbiassed; and he had seen insults where none were intended; while his action in seizing the King's ship is open to the gravest criticism. While the Myowun cannot be acquitted of an excessive regard for his own dignity, it remains that Lambert was too hot-tempered a man to be in charge of delicate negotiations. As John Lawrence remarked, "Why did you send a Commodore to Burma if you wanted peace?"; and Dalhousie, himself, on hearing of Lambert's proceedings, regretfully admitted that "these Commodores are too combustible for negotiations."[1] Furthermore, it was the opinion of some Europeans at the time that Captain Latter, on whose knowledge of the Burmese language the Commodore and his officers were primarily dependent, did his utmost to prejudice relations with the Myowun in the deliberate hope of so provoking a war in which he might find " an opening for his inordinate ambition."[2]

Lord Dalhousie, however, would probably have preferred to avoid war; and he sent a further letter to the Myowun offering to settle the matter on payment of the monetary compensation required for Sheppard and Lewis, plus the apology for the treatment received by Fishbourne, together with the re-establishment of the Residency. If these terms were accepted, the blockade would be lifted and the King's ship would be restored. Lambert, bearing these terms, arrived off the River on the 26th January.

On the 31st the *Fox* went up the River towed by the Company's steam-vessel *Fire Queen* to deliver the Governor-General's message; and as she passed the stockade at Manoel de Silva Point the battery there opened fire; the *Fox* returned the fire but did not stop her passage. She anchored in the evening at the Hastings. When the *Fire Queen* went down the River next morning she was again fired on, and the *Tenasserim* which steamed upstream to join the Commodore was also fired at. That morning, the 1st February, Lieutenant Spratt went ashore to deliver the letters embodying the Governor-General's terms, and also to make a protest against the firing by the stockades. The letters were delivered at the main wharf. On the 2nd a reply was

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[1] Warner: *Life of the Marquess of Dalhousie*, I. 417.

[2] Dobbs: *Reminiscences of Life in Mysore, South Africa, and Burmah*, p. 146. The correspondence dealing with the negotiations is in Parliamentary Papers — 4th June, 1852, and 15th March, 1853.

PLATE No. 16



Tripe: Photographs from Burmah.

NORTH ENTRANCE TO THE SHWE DAGON PAGODA, 1855.

received from the Myowun complaining of the removal of the King's ship as being contrary to the custom of all nations, offering to leave the settlement of the compensation till the arrival of the Resident, but, in regard to the apology required, suggesting that "it should be borne in mind that the English officers have been stating their own version of the case, and consequently, whilst shielding themselves, they have thrown all the blame on the other side." It was further stated, in reply to the protest about the firing by the stockades, that on the first occasion it had been justified by the removal of the King's ship and that on the second occasion it was due to Lambert's having come up the River without the customary permission. In the evening after the receipt of this reply, the *Fox* was towed back down the River by the *Tenasserim,* and on this occasion no conflict with the stockades ensued.

The blockade was maintained pending further orders from Bengal, and on the 18th February the Governor-General sent a communication stating explicity that war would be declared unless the demands previously made, together with an increased indemnity to meet the expense incurred by maintaining the blockade and preparing for war, were acceded to. The message was an ultimatum, threatening war unless the demands were complied with by the 1st April.

War was now inevitable, and both sides made active preparations. In Rangoon the last remnants of the old town were swept away. It was at the time complained that "all the houses of the merchants had been sacked, and that many of them had been burnt to the ground",[1] but this measure was undertaken for military reasons, so that no shelter might be left for any invading force between the River and the new town. For this reason the old town, such as still existed, was razed to the ground. Thus the final destruction of Alaungpaya's Rangoon took place and nothing was now left of the town that had been founded nearly a hundred years before. At the new town energetic measures were taken to strengthen the defences. A force said to number over thirty thousand, but more probably numbering only about ten thousand, was assembled; and information received in Bengal from Charles Malcolm Crisp showed that guns were being mounted at the Pagoda and that the stockade was being strengthened. At each of the south, west, and east entrances to the Pagoda eight guns were placed, though only one was put at the northern entrance where attack was not to be anticipated. Three of these guns were eighteen-pounders and the rest were six to twelve pounders. At the Myowun's residence twelve small guns and two twenty-four pounders were placed. A wall was erected along the south face of the Pagoda with embrasures for cannon. The stockade around the new town which had not so far been carried beyond the erection of the *bund* and of the gateways, was now completed so that it presented a formidable obstacle to an enemy. There was "a row of upright timbers extending for miles, as they do round the entire place, except in parts of the north and east sides, each timber fit to

[1] Baker *op. cit.*, p. 12 sqq.

be the mainmast of a ship, these timbers three deep, and so close to each other that a walking-stick could not be passed between them; behind these upright timbers is a row of horizontal ones, laid one above another; and behind all is a bank of earth twenty-four feet broad on the top, and forty-five feet at the base; the height of the top of the uprights, from the bottom of the ditch in which they are deeply planted, is generally fourteen feet. The upper part of the ditch, and that nearest the stockade, is filled with a most formidable abattis in the shape of the pointed branches of trees, struck firmly into the earth and pointing outwards; beyond this is the deep part of the ditch, which, in the rains, is of course filled with water. The upright timbers are strengthened with connecting planks, the ends of which are inserted on their tops, the other end of the plank being similarly secured by strong wooden pins in the bank inside. They are of such enormous, massive thickness, that firing at the face of a stockade would be a throwing away of powder."[1] In addition, the King's Wharf was stockaded, a roof being placed over the stockade in the form of a tank of water to extinguish any shells that might fall on it; and a stockade was erected at the old Main Wharf and another at the eastern extremity of the old town. Stockades were also placed along the roads leading from the River to the new town and some of the pagodas along these roads were fortified. Rangoon was not on this occasion to be taken by surprise. On the other side, preparations were made which, it was hoped, would obviate the disastrous mismanagement of 1824. Medical equipment, fresh meat and other stores, were provided in plenty; timber, mats, etc., for the construction of temporary barracks were prepared by Chinese carpenters at Moulmein to be taken to Rangoon in due course; hospitals were made ready at Amherst and sufficient steamship accommodation for the transport thither of sick and wounded was provided. A careful check was placed on the supply of spirits to the troops. A force of nearly 6,000 men, with thirty-five pieces of artillery, escorted by fifteen warships and carried in fifteen steamers, was organised under the command of Lieutenant-General Henry Godwin, who had served in the war of 1824; this force was drawn from both Bengal and Madras.[2] The naval force was under the command of Rear-Admiral Charles Austen (brother of the novelist Jane Austen). The Naval Commander-in-Chief arrived off the mouth of the River on the 1st April and the Bengal detachment on the 2nd. The *Proserpine* was then sent up to Rangoon under a flag of truce with Captain Latter to enquire whether any reply had been received to the ultimatum; but the ship was fired on from the stockades

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[1] Laurie *op. cit.*, p. 108. See Plate No. 16—*The North Entrance of the Shwe Dagon*, showing the stockade.

[2] *Bengal Infantry Brigade.*
H. M. 18th Regt.
H. M. 80th Regt.
40th Bengal N. I.

Madras Infantry Brigade.
H. M. 51st Regt.
5th Madras N. I.
9th Madras N. I.
35th Madras N. I.

3 Companies Royal Artillery.
3 Companies Madras Artillery.
2 Companies Madras Sappers and Miners.

and returned the fire. Any hope of peace being now at an end, the expeditionary force did not, nevertheless, commence an attack, as the Madras division had not yet arrived; a detachment was sent instead against Martaban, and meanwhile Commodore Lambert in the *Fox*, with the *Serpent*, *Tenasserim*, and *Phlegethon*, and three companies of H.M's 18th Royal Irish, went up the River on the 4th afternoon. On the morning of the 5th the *Serpent* and the *Phlegethon* with one company of the 18th made an attack on the Manoel de Silva stockade which was taken and destroyed, while the *Fox* and *Tenasserim* attacked the Danot guard-post, which, as also the stockade at the old Chokey on the other bank, was likewise taken and burnt. The demolition of these defences cleared the way for an advance up the River. On the 10th, the Madras division having arrived three days earlier, the expedition went up to the Hastings. The next day, Easter Sunday, as soon as the tide served, the ships crossed the bar and took up their positions off the old town. When the first ship anchored, firing began from the stockades on both sides of the River, to which the warships replied; and after about an hour the battery of nine eighteen-pounder guns at the King's Wharf blew up, the gunpowder, kept in a row of large jars, having caught fire. A party of seamen and marines with a company of the 18th was landed on the Dalla side and under cover of the ship's guns took the three stockades there and burnt them; while the *Serpent* and *Phlegethon* proceeded up the River and anchored off Kemmendine to capture the warboats kept there and prevent any fire-rafts from coming down. No attempt was made that day to effect a landing on the Rangoon bank, effort being directed to clearing the ground by gunfire, to such effect that the three stockades along the waterside were completely destroyed. At 4 a.m. on the following day, the 12th, the troops commenced to disembark. The guns of the ships covered the disembarkation and kept up a heavy bombardment of the new town which towards evening blew up a magazine near the Pagoda and set fire to the stockade in several places. The troops meanwhile advanced, not along the roads leading from the waterside to the Pagoda, but by a route to the east of the old town. The advance was impeded by the creeks, the bridges over which had been destroyed by the defending army, and temporary bridges had to be constructed by the Sappers. The cannonade of the defenders from the Pagoda Hill was a still more serious obstacle, and equally gunfire from the Theinbyu or "White House Stockade." Burmese skirmishers in the neighbourhood of the Stockade were easily driven off, but it proved impossible to advance until the guns behind the defences had been silenced. Four guns which accompanied the attacking force expended all their ammunition with little effect, and not till two twenty-four pounder howitzers had been brought up was it possible to storm the Stockade; this was done, with some loss, by eleven o'clock.[1]

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[1] See Plate No. 17.—*The Storming and Capture of the White House Picket Stockade.*

The exertions so far required, and the heat, led the commander to suspend the advance for that day, and the troops therefore camped near the Theinbyu till next morning; but the bombardment from the ships still continued throughout the night and did much destruction to the new town.

On the 13th it was found that the heavy guns had not yet been brought ashore and that rations had not been prepared for an advance. No movement was made, therefore, till next day, when the advance was resumed along the route to the east of the town. The defenders had anticipated that the advance would be made along the old roads leading to the southern face of the new town's stockade, and while those roads had been prepared for defence, the route actually chosen was not so well provided for; the attack was thus able to proceed on the 14th morning, through the jungle from the Theinbyu, between the Kandawgale and the Kandawgyi, until checked by the guns of the Pagoda. The infantry having cleared the ground of skirmishers, the heavy guns were now brought up by the artillerymen and the naval brigade to a point near the south-west of the Kandawgyi, though some loss was suffered from the marksmanship of the guns at the Pagoda and on the high ground above the position now occupied. It had been intended by General Godwin to storm the stockade on the east side, at noon; but at eleven o'clock Captain Latter reported to him that C. M. Crisp, who had previously sent information about the defences of Rangoon, had told him that the attack would be better directed at the Pagoda, the east entrance of which was very inadequately defended, rather than at the stockade itself. A storming party therefore advanced over a distance of eight hundred yards through open country under a heavy fire, rushed up the steps and entered the Pagoda platform. The position being now untenable the Burmese had no option but to retire, making their way out by the southern and western gates of the town under a heavy fire from the warships. So Rangoon was taken in a manner which reflects nothing but credit on the courage of both attackers and defenders.

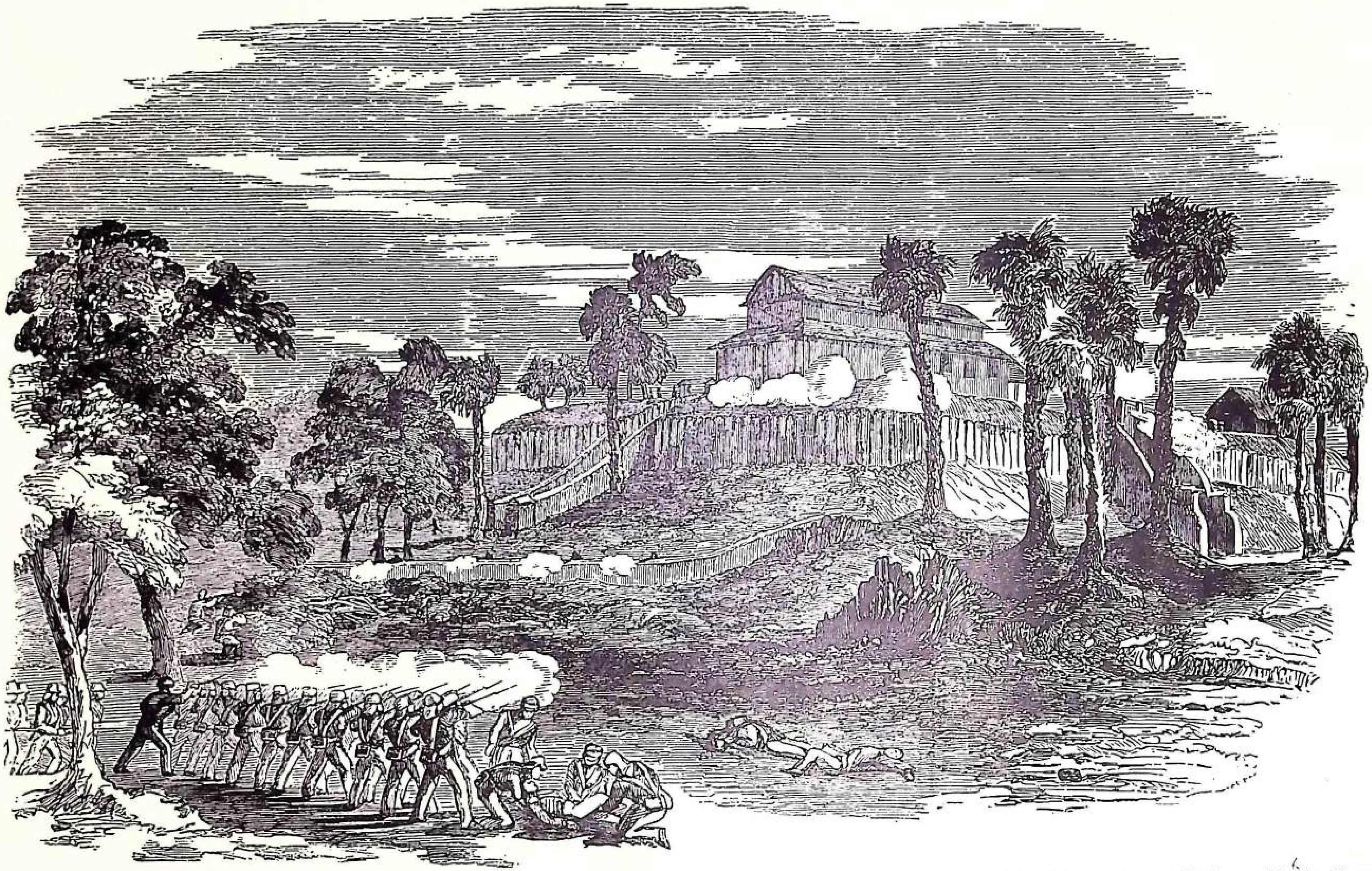
It may be noted that whereas in 1824 the town and Pagoda had been taken without the loss of a man, in 1852 the attacking force lost sixteen killed and one hundred and thirty-three wounded, besides some thirty of the naval force.[1]

There was some further skirmishing around Rangoon, but little serious fighting. The rest of the Delta was quickly occupied, and, in default of the execution of a treaty with the Burmese Government, was declared annexed by a proclamation dated the 20th December 1852.

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[1] In addition, the army lost two officers by sun-stroke, *viz.* Major A. F. Oakes, Madras Artillery, whose death is commemorated by an obelisque on the Prome Road Gold Course, and Major H. Griffiths, Brigade Major, Madras Brigade. Major Oakes was actually buried at the Botataung Pagoda.

PLATE No. 17



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STORMING AND CAPTURE OF WHITE HOUSE PICKET STOCKADE, 1852

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CHAPTER NINE

THE PLANNING OF THE MODERN CITY.

AFTER the taking of the town, the occupying force was distributed either under canvas or among the larger buildings, generally kyaungs, in Tharrawaddy's city, though the artillery, as in 1824, was stationed on the Pagoda Hill. The town was considered to be unsatisfactory in shape for cantonment and defensive purposes, and the northern part consisting of the projecting north-west wing and the ground between it and the Pagoda was cut off by the digging of entrenchments from the Shin Sawbu Gate to the western entrance to the Pagoda. Inside the limited area so defined, barracks were erected within a few weeks of the occupation, made from the timbers brought ready-cut from Moulmein: though many of the ecclesiastical buildings continued in use as mess-rooms and offices. Kemmendine was also occupied; a few days after the taking of the Pagoda a detachment was sent out by the North Gate of the city, passed through "a picturesque piece of country; and after half an hour's walk, over an excellent brick road" reached the village, which was entered without resistance. Kemmendine proved to be a smaller place than, in view of its importance in the War of 1824, had been expected, for it was found to consist of "one long, narrow street, of dirty, low-eaved bamboo huts, which, following the line of the shore, was floored with little black bricks, and roofed with multitudinous and various foliage."[1]

Thanks to the careful preparations made under the direction of the Governor-General, the garrison which held Rangoon during the rains of 1852 suffered few of the discomforts which had afflicted their predecessors of 1824. Fresh rations were available within a week of the capture of the town, and there was very little sickness. An outbreak of cholera which occurred a few days after the occupation, mainly as a result of an excessive consumption of pineapples, and a certain amount of dysentery, were the principal causes of casualties; but in comparison with the normal rate of sickness in an army in the field in those days, the losses were slight. From the middle of May to the middle of June, the Bengal division of 3,300 men lost only twenty-two by sickness.

The troops, as in 1824, found little in the way of loot in the town, but plenty in the pagodas. "Numbers of curious sawmies, of brass, of clay covered with a thin coating of silver, wood, and alabaster, are being brought into camp by the men. Gilt wooden cabinets and boxes, some of them very chaste, are likewise to be seen here and there", wrote an observer on the 18th April; and, a few days later, "It is strange to observe the numerous idols lying about the upper terrace. There is a soldier busy with his pick-axe,

[1] Laurie, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
Anon: *Golden Dagon*, p. 113.

excavating a huge golden image with as much coolness as if he were digging a trench. He is looking for treasure—gold, or small silver figures, or rubies, which he will dispose of as well as he can".[1]

The town of Rangoon, from which most of the inhabitants had fled, was quickly repopulated. By July there were said, with a good deal of exaggeration, to be sixty or seventy thousand inhabitants.[2] Probably there were less than half the suggested number. The civil population were not, however, welcome in what was left of Tharrawaddy's town, for that was the cantonment area; while "the old town", reported Godwin, "which stood on the river bank, has been utterly destroyed, its bricks now lying in heaps on its site". Some measures had therefore to be taken for the housing of the population, which included hundreds of immigrants from India who had come in the train of the expeditionary force, besides many from Moulmein, and plots of land were granted by the military commander for temporary occupation, on the understanding that the sites must later be vacated when some decision had been arrived at about the future of Rangoon. To place the matter beyond doubt, a proclamation was issued by the General in the following terms:

> "It is to be distinctly understood that all persons now occupying houses and land in Rangoon, only occupy and hold the same on sufferance; present permission gives them no legal right to the property. The British Government is now at war with Ava, and although the army has taken Rangoon, that circumstance gives the Commander no power to assign land or houses to any person whatever. All these matters will be arranged after peace has been restored either by British Commissioners, or the Burmese authorities, as the case may be".[3]

This proclamation was the more necessary as there was as yet no certainty of the future of Lower Burma. Certain measures were, however, necessary for the government of the town, whether the occupation was to be permanent or not. In April Commodore Lambert promulgated an order for the regulation of the port, requiring all ships to produce their bills of lading to the Master Attendant, to land goods only at the Custom House wharf and only between the hours of sunrise and sunset, and to secure a permit from the Master Attendant permitting the landing. The import of wines and spirits and of fire-arms and ammunition without a special order from the Army Headquarters or from the Senior Naval Officer was forbidden. At the same time, as an encouragement to settlers, the export of rice and other grain and foodstuffs was prohibited, and no timber was allowed to be exported; for the supply of food had to be safeguarded in view of the still disturbed state of the Delta, while timber was urgently needed by those erecting houses as well

[1] Laurie, *op. cit.*, pp. 116, 125.
[2] *ibid.* p. 189.
[3] Quoted Laurie, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

as for official purposes. Steps were also taken to facilitate navigation by laying down buoys, employing a pilot-brig, and constructing a new wharf; and to meet the expenditure so incurred a tonnage-duty of four annas a ton was imposed on all ships not in the employ of Government arriving in the port after the 22nd May: Mr. R. S. Edwards being appointed Collector for the purpose.

For the time being, the town remained under military administration, Captain Latter, and later Lieutenant R. D. Ardagh, acting as magistrates.

There was little disturbance in Rangoon, despite the fact that the town had only so recently been occupied. During the remainder of the year 1852 the only alarm was caused by an accident, when on the 1st November a small magazine near the Pagoda blew up, killing half-a-dozen men; "pieces of wood, fiery gun-wads, and musket-balls, were sent into the air with terrific force; and an artillery European gunner, who was sentry over the upper magazine at the time, was lifted some feet off the ground", stated an eye-witness of the occurrence. Some of the musket-balls fell through roofs of houses hundreds of yards away and there was a danger that neighbouring buildings would catch fire; but the conflagration was soon got under, the only building destroyed being the theatre, a large wooden building, presumably a zayat, "off a grand stair-case near the upper terrace of the Shwe Dagon", where on the 20th August there had been an amateur performance of Douglas Jerrold's play *Rest Day* and the farce *The Happy Man*; this "pleasant place of amusement, with all its excellent scenery", was completely destroyed.[1] A more serious affair was an attempted rising against the newly established British authority which occurred twelve months later, when the Company's rule had been definitely established in Lower Burma. A plan was made to seize the Pagoda platform, and to fire from it a gun as a signal to the town to rise, whereupon the plotters in the town were to seize the Treasury, fire the Court and the Custom House, and kill all the English and their adherents. The plot was, however, discovered, and on the night of the 22nd-23rd November, 1853, the garrison troops occupied the salient points. This alarmed the plotters and the attempt was abandoned; a number of arrests were effected, and the excitement was thus allayed. To prevent any further such attempts, the fortification of part of the Pagoda by means of an embrasured wall was decided upon, and that part of the platform was set aside to be held by a guard as an arsenal and as a place of refuge in the event of disturbances. The Pagoda itself was "handed over under rules to the servants of the Pagoda who formerly were charged with it".[2]

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[1] Laurie: *Second Burmese War* — Pegu, p. 20.
Laurie: *Our Burmese Wars*, p. 206.
Dobbs: *Reminiscences of Life in Mysore, South Africa and Burmah, p. 198.*

[2] *Phayre Ms. Diary*, 22nd and 23rd November, 1853.
India Secret Proceedings, 14th February, 1854.

When the annexation of the Delta, now to be the commissioners's division of Pegu, was determined on, provision needed to be made for the civil government. As early as the month of May 1852, only a few weeks after the occupation of Rangoon, certain of the European inhabitants who had now returned had petitioned General Godwin for the appointment of a civil magistrate, and had indicated as a suitable candidate for the post the turbulent May Flower Crisp, who had himself organized the petition. A copy of the petition was sent direct to the Governor-General, from whom it received short shrift; for the firm of Crisp & Co., which had so often been in hot water with the Burmese authorities, was equally in the bad books of Lord Dalhousie, since it had "sold powder, muskets, and military stores" to the Burmese after it had become quite apparent that hostilities were about to occur. It is curious that Crisp's son, C. M. Crisp, should also have provided information to the Governor-General about the fortifications of Rangoon and should at the time of the attack on the Pagoda have shown the way to the eastern entrance by which the attackers took, with little loss, what would otherwise have been a very strong position: but the Myowun's refusal to pay for the arms no doubt accounts for this. Lord Dalhousie rejected the petition and sent a plain warning that Crisp was to abstain from all interference with the people of the Pegu province on pain of deportation: from this it would appear that Crisp had already been trying to exercise some sort of authority in the town. Captain Phayre, Commissioner of Arakan, appears to have been more favourably disposed towards the petition, however, writing to Crisp that he had "great claims from your long residence among (the inhabitants of Rangoon) and your intimate knowledge of their claims, interests, and wants".[1]

Annexation having been determined on, Lord Dalhousie drew up a scheme for the civil government of Pegu. The new province was to be administered by a Commissioner, the first occupant of the office to be Captain Phayre. In Rangoon itself there was to be a magistrate in charge of police, with jurisdiction over criminal and petty civil cases arising within the limits of the town and port; Lieutenant Ardagh, who was already acting as military magistrate, was appointed to this post on a salary of Rs. 800 a month plus Rs. 100 boat-allowance. A Deputy Commissioner, in the person of Captain T. P. Sparks, was also appointed for the Rangoon town and district on a salary of Rs. 1,000 a month with boat-allowance of Rs. 100; he would hear civil cases to which any European was a party, and appeals would lie from him to the Commissioner.

Captain Phayre arrived in the Rangoon River on the 18th December, and landed on the morning of the 19th. On the 21st the troops were paraded at 6 a.m. outside the stockade and the proclamation of annexation was read. In this way the civil government of Rangoon was inaugurated.

[1] *Memorial in 33rd Street.*

Many problems confronted the new government. Of first importance to Rangoon was the organization of the port. A pilot service of some sort was urgently needed; the Commodore favoured a government service of pilots but Phayre preferred the issue of licenses under the Commissioner's authority permitting the holders to follow the profession of pilot at the particular port, whether Rangoon or Bassein, indicated therein; the pilots would depend for their income on fees, a maximum, but not a minimum, charge to be laid down. It was further necessary to establish a range of fees to meet the expense of laying down buoys and in general preserving the safety of shipping. The question also arose whether a lighthouse should be erected at the River mouth. Phayre proposed to station a lightship there rather than erect a light-house; a ship of one or two hundred tons, staffed by a mate in charge at Rupees one hundred and fifty a month, a second-mate at Rupees seventy-five, a serang at Rupees twenty and twelve lascars on Rupees twelve each, would, he thought, be sufficient. The King's ship which the Commodore had seized in January 1852 could be thus utilised. To meet the cost, he proposed a port-duty of eight annas a ton on shipping. On the other hand the Superintendent of Marine at Calcutta, to whom these problems were referred, was in favour of a light-house, as the cost of upkeep would be less than that of a lightship. He was also of opinion that the proposed rate of port-dues was too high and that four annas a ton as at Calcutta should be the maximum; indeed, if, he said, a light-house were built and pilotage were left to public competition, the pilots being paid by the ships direct, two annas a ton should be sufficient to meet the cost of light-house, buoys, and the capital spent on port-buildings on shore. The Governor-General's decision, made in March 1853, was that a lightship should be established pending the erection of a light-house, that no establishment of government pilots should be entertained, and that the maximum port-dues should be four annas a ton.[1]

The Customs system also needed to be regularised. As early as December 1852 it was resolved to impose the same rates of import and export duties as at Calcutta with effect from the 1st February 1853. Mr. Edwards was continued in the office of Collector, and, Phayre noted a year later, had managed to institute the customs system satisfactorily although "people were rather inclined to dispute many of his orders regarding cargoes". In 1854 by Act XXX customs dues were levied in Arakan and Tenasserim as well as in Pegu on the same scale as in India, as a result of Phayre's complaint that, Akyab and Moulmein being free ports, the revenues of Pegu suffered by smuggling over the land frontiers.[2]

A post-office system was inaugurated: the first Postmaster, on a salary of Rupees three hundred a month, being C. M. Crisp, who received the appointment as a reward for his assistance at the storming of the Pagoda. The crimes of Messrs. Crisp and Co. were evidently soon forgiven.

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[1] *India Secret Proceedings*, 15th April, 1858.
[2] *India and Bengal Despatches* Vol. 92..

Other problems arose, such as the numerous claims advanced for compensation for losses incurred during and before the war. So far as Rangoon was concerned, these claims issued from the destruction of buildings and therefore of movable property when the Burmese authorities cleared the site of the old town before war actually broke out. Claims totalling in all Rupees 19,36,678, were submitted. The Government of India was not, however, prepared to admit all of these claims. Though prepared to consider "reasonable claims" by British subjects for movable property seized or destroyed in violation of the Treaty of Yandabo, it would not admit any claim in respect of houses destroyed. Under the treaty British subjects had the right to reside in Rangoon and carry on trade, and the Government of India was equitably, though perhaps not legally, bound to protect them from injury to person or property: the Government of India should therefore require the Burmese Government to compensate the sufferers, and the annexation of Pegu might be regarded as being made in lieu thereof; therefore Government should pay compensation out of the revenues of Pegu. But the Burmese Government had never given land to foreigners and rarely permitted permanent buildings to be erected; anyone who erected such a building did so at his own risk and by the custom of the country was liable to see it destroyed or appropriated at the discretion of the Burmese authorities. He thus had no property in it. Compensation could therefore be paid only in respect of timber, merchandise, and personal property. No claims, moreover, could be admitted from other than British subjects, as such persons had no claim to protection, except in the case of the members of the American Baptist Mission "whose losses, in conformity to the Governor-General's recommendation, founded on their sacred calling and beneficent exertions, we are willing to make good, to the extent of such private property as consisted of necessary clothing and furniture". The claims of Messrs. Crisp and Co. were rejected in view of the assistance which they gave to the Burmese, and for the same reason the claims of Moolah Cassim and Moolah Ibrahim were also rejected. These claims amounted to Rs. 41,490 in the case of Crisp and Rs. 29,370 in the other case. Mr. G. D. Wilkins, Bengal Civil Service, was appointed commissioner for the investigation of claims, and awarded a total compensation of Rs. 2,59,971 out of the Rs. 19,00,000 claimed, and even this the Governor-General thought too generous[1].

Another problem, of a related nature, arose from the action of the Prize Agents. They, encouraged by General Godwin, claimed as captured property all timber found lying in logs within the annexed province, and proceeded to make good their claim by seizure. Thus the unfortunate company of Crisp complained that over a score of pieces of timber suitable for use as masts of ships, which they had had at Martaban, had been seized as

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[1] *India and Bengal Despatches, Bengal Military,* 22nd June, 1853, No. 23.

prize of war; and the Superintendent of Marine complained that essential works at Rangoon, such as the construction of docks for the repair of Government vessels, were being held up because the Agents had seized all the timber in the place, and when a merchant offered to supply timber the Agents had threatened to attach it immediately on arrival; while Phayre objected that the timber industry was completely at a standstill and the private inhabitants of Rangoon as well as the Government were being obstructed in the urgent work of erecting houses and other buildings. The Governor-General sought the opinion of the Advocate-General, who stated that the action taken by the Prize Agents was illegal except in so far as it affected such timber "as may have been captured in actual assault or by capitulation or surrender in fear of assault"; and that further, the forests of Lower Burma having been the property of the Burmese Government and being now the property of the Government of India, the Prize Agents could have no claim except on timber proved to have been disposed of by the Burmese Government to private persons. The Governor-General therefore directed, in May 1853, that the newly-appointed Deputy Commissioner should in company with the Prize Agents make an inventory of such timber as had been publicly owned and of such as had been in private hands, such timber then to be used or exported subject to any claim that the Agents might later establish.[1]

The Prize Agents had been partially responsible for what was, in the eyes of men like Dalhousie and Phayre, an even graver impropriety. As in 1824, the troops had sought for loot and the pagodas of Rangoon and of other parts of the Delta had suffered. In the case of the more important pagodas it would seem that the Prize Agents were responsible;[2] in other cases many of the military and naval officers were personally responsible. Phayre on his arrival in Rangoon found that once more even the Shwe Dagon had not been exempt from attack, the officer responsible for driving a gallery into the Pagoda, Major Fraser, R.E., advancing, however, the ingenious excuse that he wanted to see whether the Pagoda could be used as a powder-magazine, though unkind critics opined that King Hsinbyushin's treasure was more in his mind. Phayre addressed Brigadier Sir John Cheape, who was in command at Rangoon, pointing out the objectionable nature of such a proceeding which had, he was informed, caused great pain to King Mindon and might thus lead to a further breach of friendship. He also referred the matter to the Governor-General, drawing attention to "the disgraceful manner in which the Pagodas all over the Province have been dug into and plundered" and observing that such acts must create ill-feeling among the local population as well as in Upper Burma; it was true that General Godwin and Commodore Lambert had on his representations endeavoured to prevent the continuance of such proceedings, but he felt that some action by Government was called for, "from

[1] *India Secret Proceedings* 27th May, 1853.
[2] Laurie: *Second Burmese War — Rangoon*, p. 128.

a thorough conviction of the danger which may arise from a people being roused to indignation in consequence of the utter disregard which has in times past been shown to their religious feelings". Dalhousie was gravely displeased; "I deeply regret," he observed, "the proceedings which were undertaken by authority as shown in the annexed correspondence whereby a Gallery driven into the great Pagoda at Rangoon during the war of 1824 was last year opened by the Commanding Engineer for the purpose of 'ascertaining whether the gallery could not be used as a powder magazine.' The act was not a wanton desecration nor was it wholly without warrant for the Bad shahi Musjid in the Citadel at Lahore was for many years used for a precisely similar purpose. But the Shwe Dagon Pagoda is of great note and of peculiar sanctity among the Buddhists; and I again regret the error of judgment that led to the breaking into the Pagoda which was not the less a painful desecration in the eyes of the people that it had been committed on a former occasion." He therefore issued an order in the following terms—

> "The Most Noble the Governor-General in Council has learnt with regret and dissatisfaction the continued destruction and injury to Pagodas and places of worship throughout the Province of Pegu. Such acts of violence in a time of open war cannot be wholly prevented, but his Lordship in Council feels strongly the scandal which their continuance now is calculated to bring upon our national character and the exasperation which an open and almost universal desecration of their sacred places may produce in the minds of the people of Pegu. His Lordship in Council therefore desires to notify to all who are in the service of the Government that whoever shall be proved to offend in this particular hereafter shall be punished with prompt severity. The Governor-General in Council expects that all officers within the Province, whether Civil or Military, will give special attention to the execution of the orders which are notified hereby."[1]

But the chief problem confronting the new rulers of Rangoon was the planning of a city. As soon as it became apparent that the province of Pegu would not be retroceded, designs for rebuilding the capital were taken into consideration. The architects of modern Rangoon were fortunate in that they had a clean sheet on which to work: Alaungpaya's Rangoon had completely disappeared, while Tharrawaddy's city had suffered much damage from the bombardment and, apart from that, contained no secular buildings of any structural or architectural value. It was thus possible and necessary to design a completely new city on completely new lines; there was no obligation to adhere to the old plan in any respect, for no property in the land of Rangoon was admitted to any private person, all being regarded as Government land.

As Lord Dalhousie observed when he visited the town late in 1852, "the place will certainly grow in importance as a port if at all,"[2] and there was

[1] *India Secret Proceedings* 29th March, 1853.
[2] Hall: *Dalhousie-Phayre Correspondence*, letter dated 8th December, 1852.

from the first no question of siting the new town anywhere but on the river bank. It was therefore necessary to design a town which would not only meet modern requirements in point of ground-plan but also avoid the grave defect from which Alaungpaya's Rangoon had suffered of being frequently flooded. In the planning of the new town the authorities had the advantage of the advice of Dr. William Montgomerie, who had come to Burma as Superintendent Surgeon with the troops in 1852. As a surgeon on the Bengal establishment, Montgomerie had been posted to Singapore in 1819, and had remained there until 1842; he had thus been there when the new town of Singapore was established by Sir Stamford Raffles, and as he had been appointed a magistrate and had also been Secretary to the Town Committee which was entrusted with the laying-out of that city, he had, in his own words, "had considerable experience and consider myself qualified to give an opinion as to the best plan of laying out a new Town". As early as September 1852 he submitted a memorandum on the planning of the new Rangoon. He was, he stated, "very much struck with the advantageous site for a commercial city presented by Rangoon on our first arrival and every day has increased the favourable impression". The river frontage was the most valuable asset of the place, and he urged that a Strand of at least 160 feet in depth be kept clear of buildings. Streets 60 feet in width and 200 feet distant from one another should be placed at right-angles to the Strand, and, running almost north-south, these roads would be cool since except at midday they would always have one shaded side; while they would be wide enough for ventilation and for safety from fire. The land at the back of the Strand should be allocated for mercantile purposes and should be divided into lots 40 feet wide and 150 feet deep. Along the centre of each street should be placed a conduit to carry water from the river at each high tide up to reservoirs at the place occupied by the swamp near the Sule Pagoda or farther inland where the ground begins to rise towards the Shwe Dagon. These conduits should be enclosed, but should be large enough for a man to enter for cleaning purposes. At every hundred feet a well should be sunk through the conduit to a dept of 12 or 15 feet below the base so as to provide a constant reserve of water for use in case of fire; some means might be adopted to bring in water from the River even at low-tide if the supply in any well became exhausted. The purpose of the reservoirs near the Sule Pagoda was to feed a sewage system; Montgomerie proposed that down the centre of each block of buildings a narrow lane or back-drainage-space should be placed, along which a sewer should be carried to the River; the reservoirs should be opened to flush the sewers half-an-hour before low-water; the flood from the reservoirs would thus rush through with sufficient force to cleanse the sewers thoroughly. The land along the streets running north-south should be divided into lots of 20 feet in width which would extend to the back-drainage-space and so would be 80 feet deep. The cross streets running east-west should be about 500 feet apart, and be made wider than the

north-south streets, perhaps 100 feet; rows of trees such as mango and tamarind should be planted down the centre to give shade. Every house in the town should have its own well; while at the higher levels there should also be public wells and bathing places, any overflow or wastage from which should pass into reservoirs to be used in flushing the sewers leading from the higher part of the town. These sewers, as in that part of the town nearer the River, should also pass down the back-drainage spaces; and in the more crowded parts of the town public privies should be erected over them. The housing sites in the town should be put up to public auction, the proceeds being used in laying out the streets; restrictions should be placed on the type of building which might be erected.[1]

Montgomerie's suggestions thus provided for a town of chess-board pattern, equipped with a sanitary system; and though the actual work of planning was not entrusted to him, the officer who undertook the task, Lieutenant A. Fraser, Bengal Engineers, did in fact largely follow the lines which Montgomerie had suggested.

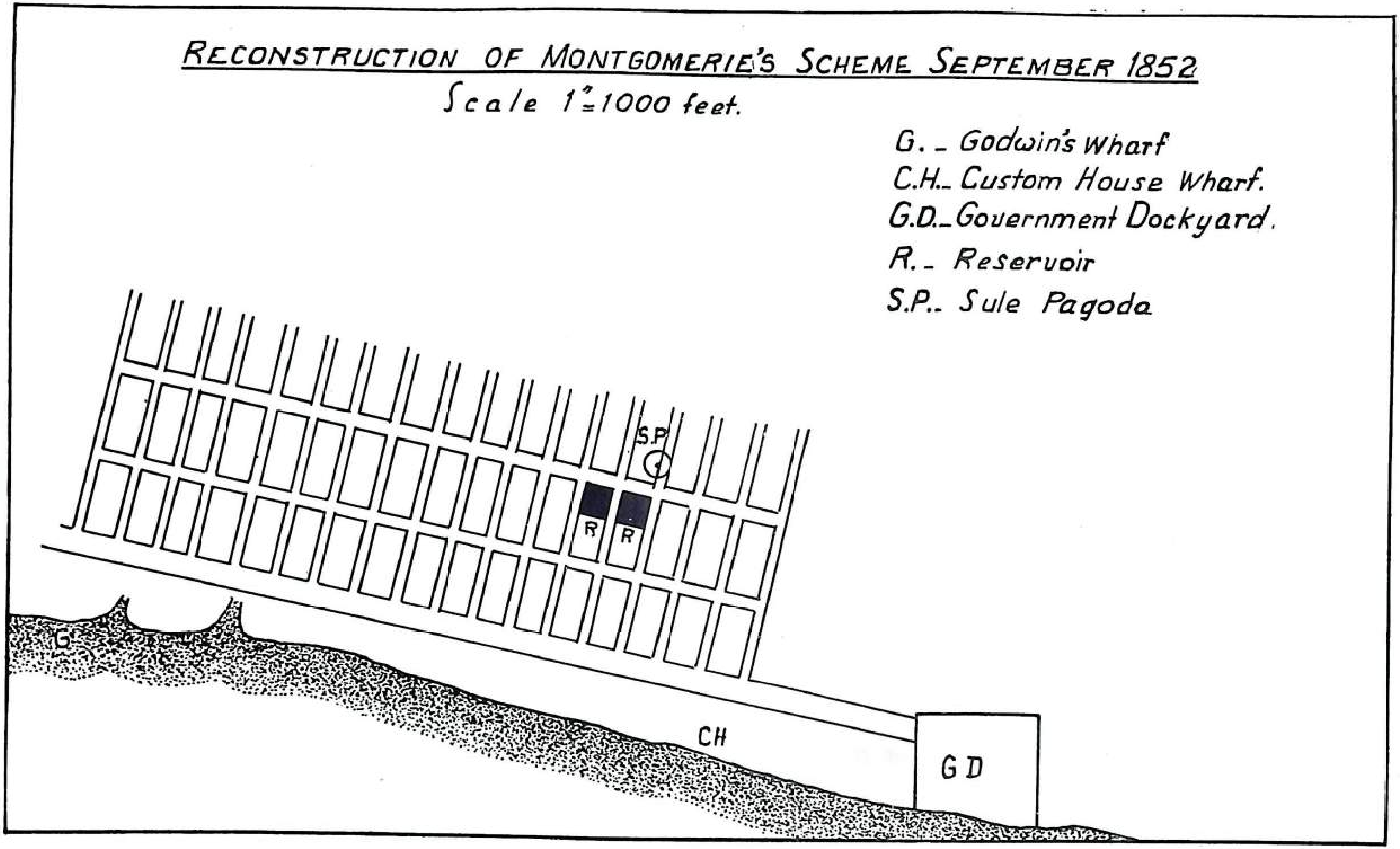
Shortly after Montgomerie submitted his memorandum, Fraser made a more detailed proposal. The major problem, in his view, was to deal with the flooding which was liable to occur at high-water. At every spring-tide the greater part of the town was under water, and the first consideration must be therefore to keep out the River water or at least to confine its ingress within useful limits. He proposed a *bund* along the Riverside. A single line of piles, placed close together, should be carried for a distance of about 2,500 yards along the bank from Godwin's Wharf[2] down to the Government Dockyard;[3] the necessary timber could be obtained from the stockade at Tharrawaddy's town, which would supply all that was needed and more also. The tops of the piles should be about 1½ feet above high-water level. Inside the line of piles a Strand Road, forty feet wide, should be constructed, the road being raised to the level of the tops of the piles. The amount of construction would not be excessively great, as on an average an embankment of only three feet height would be required, the earth for which might be obtained from the excavations which were being made for new docks at Dalla. The refuse of the town should be thrown outside the *bund* and thus a gradual slope down to the water would be obtained. It would never be necessary to renew the timbers, as the *bund* would in time become sufficiently consolidated to resist the encroachments of the waters even when the timbers had rotted. Having thus provided against flooding, Fraser would, following Montgomerie's plan, keep the Strand clear of buildings. The town behind the Strand should be divided into two parts, an upper part and a lower part,

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[1] Buckley: *Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore*,
Selections from Papers regarding the Laying Out of the Town of Rangoon.

[2] The King's Wharf of Tharrawaddy.

[3] The Dockyard lay opposite Brooking Street.


RECONSTRUCTION OF MONTGOMERIE'S SCHEME SEPTEMBER 1852
Scale 1" = 1000 feet.
G. – Godwin's Wharf
C.H. – Custom House Wharf.
G.D. – Government Dockyard.
R. – Reservoir
S.P. – Sule Pagoda
S.P.
R
R
G
CH
G D

the line of division being a drain carried parallel to the Strand and passing south of the Sule Pagoda and out into the river by the ditch which lay at the east of the old stockade. This drain, 8 feet deep and 10 to 15 feet wide, would provide for the drainage of the whole upper town. The swamp near the Sule Pagoda should be filled in with refuse of the upper town. The lower town should be divided by main sewers at right angles to the Strand, the sewers to communicate laterally with one another, some parts to be be kept always full of water for use in case of fire. Five such sewers should be constructed, thus dividing the town into six parts from Godwin's Wharf at Lanmadaw as far as the old Custom House Wharf. These drains should be 250 yards apart, and a road at least 40 feet wide should run between each two drains. The housing sites should run back from the roads to about 20 feet from the drains; thus fire would not spread easily from one part of the town to another. A number of lateral roads, also 40 feet wide, should be provided. Fraser's scheme thus proposed six 40 foot roads running up from the River plus an unspecified number of 40 foot lateral roads.[1]

Fraser's scheme, with its 40 foot roads compares poorly with Montgomerie's with its 60 foot north-south roads and 100 foot east-west roads. It will be observed that both Montgomerie and Fraser thought primarily of a town which would not extend beyond the Sule Pagoda and so would be no larger than Alaungpaya's town with its suburb of Tatgale, and that neither took any account of the Sule Pagoda, whose position was entirely ignored.

The scheme had to be modified to provide for a larger city, and when Phayre came to Rangoon in the December Fraser had already developed his first proposal into a more extensive plan. Phayre realised the essential importance of arriving at a proper lay-out, and he informed Lord Dalhousie that "my first act after landing was to set about enquiries relative to the laying out of the town of Rangoon". He came to the conclusion that Fraser's plan as it had developed was sound. "It provides", he wrote, "for bunding out the river water, which now occasionally rises over the western part of the town at the King's wharf (now Godwin's Wharf), and carrying a strand road 150 (or more) feet broad from that point direct east, as far as the present Government Naval Yard—or as far as it may be found advisable to extend the town in that direction. A road one hundred feet broad will also run from Godwin's Wharf direct north to the Great Pagoda. It is proposed then to lay out the town of Rangoon with reference to the lines of these two roads, which will run at right angles. At intervals of about 750 feet there will be roads of one hundred feet broad, running from the Strand road north, and intersected by roads of similar width running east and west. The intervening spaces between these main roads will be divided by three roads of 30 feet width each. A trench or canal will be cut from the river, commencing at the present eastern extremity of the town, where the Government docks

[1] *Selections from Papers.*

now are, and it will be continued in a northern and western direction, passing between the town and the stockade,[1] and be carried down to the river again at Godwin's Wharf. By this canal water will be admitted at high tide, and retained by sluice gates. Arched masonry sewers will be run up the streets leading north direct from the river to this canal, and into these sewers the filth of the town will be conducted. The water of the canal retained at the upper part of the town, will, whenever required, be let off through the sewers, and so, it is hoped, the town will be preserved clean and healthy".[2]

Fraser, in a memorandum dated the 2nd January 1853, gives further detail. The basic point in the scheme was to be "a post in the centre of the road leading to Godwin's wharf (about 255 feet from the same to the north)"; all roads were to be one foot above high-water mark, the level to be taken from this post. All north-south roads were to be parallel to this road, which had already been aligned from the wharf to the stockade and was one hundred feet wide; while the east-west roads were to be perpendicular to it, thus preserving the originally proposed chess-board pattern. The centres of each two 100 foot east-west roads were to be 900 feet apart, commencing from the basic post, so giving blocks of buildings of 800 feet. In the case of the southernmost east-west road, the Strand, it was desirable that it should be carried parallel to the River at a distance of about 250 feet from the bank; therefore it would not in fact maintain a due east-west direction, but would bear off slightly southward. The main line commencing at Godwin's Wharf was, however, to be carried straight through the town and the north-south roads were to be perpendicular to that and not to the variable Strand Road. The chess-board pattern would thus not be consistently maintained at the southern extremity of the town. All the ground between the Strand and the River was to be kept "perfectly clear" of buildings. At the fourth east-west road a canal should be dug, about 25 feet wide, from Godwin's Road to the east of the Dockyard, where there should be a self-acting sluice to retain the water which would flow in at high tide; this canal would provide the water for flushing the sewers which were to run down to the River. Public privies, as Montgomerie had proposed, were to be erected over these sewers, which would be carried down narrow streets 15 feet broad parallel to the north-south roads. The canal would contain only river water and might therefore be open and navigable for boats. The earth excavated in making the canal should be used in making roads, which would have to be raised above the existing level of the ground. The swamp near the Sule Pagoda, and all other swamps and tanks, were to be filled up with earth obtained from the higher ground, where tanks might be dug for the purpose. The first road to be constructed should be Godwin's Road, and also, for immediate use, temporary bridges should be erected along the proposed line of the Strand Road to provide passage over the existing channels.[3]

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[1] *i.e.* Tharrawaddy's stockade.
[2] Hall, *op. cit.*, letter dated 25th December, 1852.
[3] *Selections from Papers.*

The scheme as now developed had abandoned the proposed drain running in front of the Sule Pagoda, had adopted 100 foot roads instead of the 40 foot roads of Fraser's original plan, and was designed to cover a much greater area than either Fraser or Montgomerie had at first thought necessary. Also, a wide area of land along the River had been reserved; Montgomerie had proposed that land to a depth of 160 feet be kept clear of buildings, but Lord Dalhousie, at the time of his visit to Burma, had considered that this was inadequate. It was essential, in his view, that "the river-bank should be kept clear and with ample space for wharves, docks, godowns, etc........ The impression I derived from a very cursory view of the bank, when I was at Rangoon, was that too little space had been reserved." It was now proposed that 250 feet should be reserved. Further modifications were later adopted, and the scheme was then approved by the Governor-General, although he regarded it as "rather costly and expensive for *immediate* execution. It will, however, be quite right to lay out the town from the first with reference to the full adoption of this plan ultimately". It was estimated that an expenditure of five or six lakhs of rupees would be required.[1]

The town as actually created extended only from Godwin's Road on the west to what is now Judah Ezekiel Street on the east, and from the River on the south as far as the present Montgomerie Street and Commissioner Road on the north, and allowed for an estimated population of only 36,000. Fraser's final plan, while taking Godwin's Road as its starting point, nevertheless adopted the Sule Pagoda as the centre of the town, so that the town was thus moved westwards as compared with Alaungpaya's Rangoon. A 200 foot road was formed running northwards from the River, with the Pagoda in its middle: in the western part of the town there were aligned four 100 foot roads running north-south, and in the eastern part three such roads, all parallel to the Sule Pagoda Road. The distance between each two such roads was 850 feet, not 750 as had formerly been intended; and the blocks thus formed were not divided by three 30 foot roads but by one central 50 foot road and four minor 30 foot roads, all running north-south. The east-west roads were four in number, each being 100 feet wide, and placed at 800 foot intervals; this part of the system according with Fraser's proposal of the 2nd January. In addition there was, as he had suggested, the Strand Road which followed the line of the River. The narrow 15 foot roads carrying sewers were abandoned in favour of back-drainage-spaces running north-south between each two roads. The scheme thus adopted provided for a city of some 500 acres area.

The Cantonment area was excluded from the town-plan. The military authorities were responsible for the planning of this region, and the policy adopted by them appears to have been largely different from that adopted by

[1] Hall, *op. cit.*, letters dated 8th December, 1852, and 1st January, 1853.

the civil authorities in the town, since the chess-board pattern was adopted only partially, and in a few cases the line of the old roads of Tharrawaddy's city was followed.[1]

The new town-plan having been accepted, it became necessary to name the roads. For the minor north-south roads a system of numerals was introduced, from 17th Street on the west to 44th Street on the east, the lower numerals being omitted to provide for extension on the west. For the more important roads, it was scandalously said, Lord Dalhousie was personally responsible and distributed the streets among the names of his favourites during the consumption of after-dinner port.[2] The names adopted were, from east to west,—

East Street, marking the eastern limit of the town: renamed *Judah Ezekiel* Street in 1877 in memory of a Jewish gentleman who left a sum of money for the improvement of the town.

Brooking Street, after Captain Brooking of the Company's warship *Proserpine*.

Sparks Street, after Captain T. P. Sparks, Deputy Commissioner, Rangoon.

Lewis Street, after Captain Harold Lewis, Master Attendant, formerly of the *Champion*.

Phayre Street, after (Sir) Arthur Purvis Phayre, first Commissioner of Pegu.

Barr Street, after G. E. Barr, Assistant Commissioner, formerly Sitke at Moulmein.

Sule Pagoda Road.

Sitke Maung Tawlay Street, after a distinguished Mon gentleman who, born in 1776, was Governor of Dalla under the Burmese, fled to Moulmein in 1827; became Sitke under the British; rendered valuable service in 1852; organised the regilding of the Shwe Dagon in 1854; and died at Twante in 1869.

Mogul Street, after the Muslim merchants who settled in that quarter of the town.

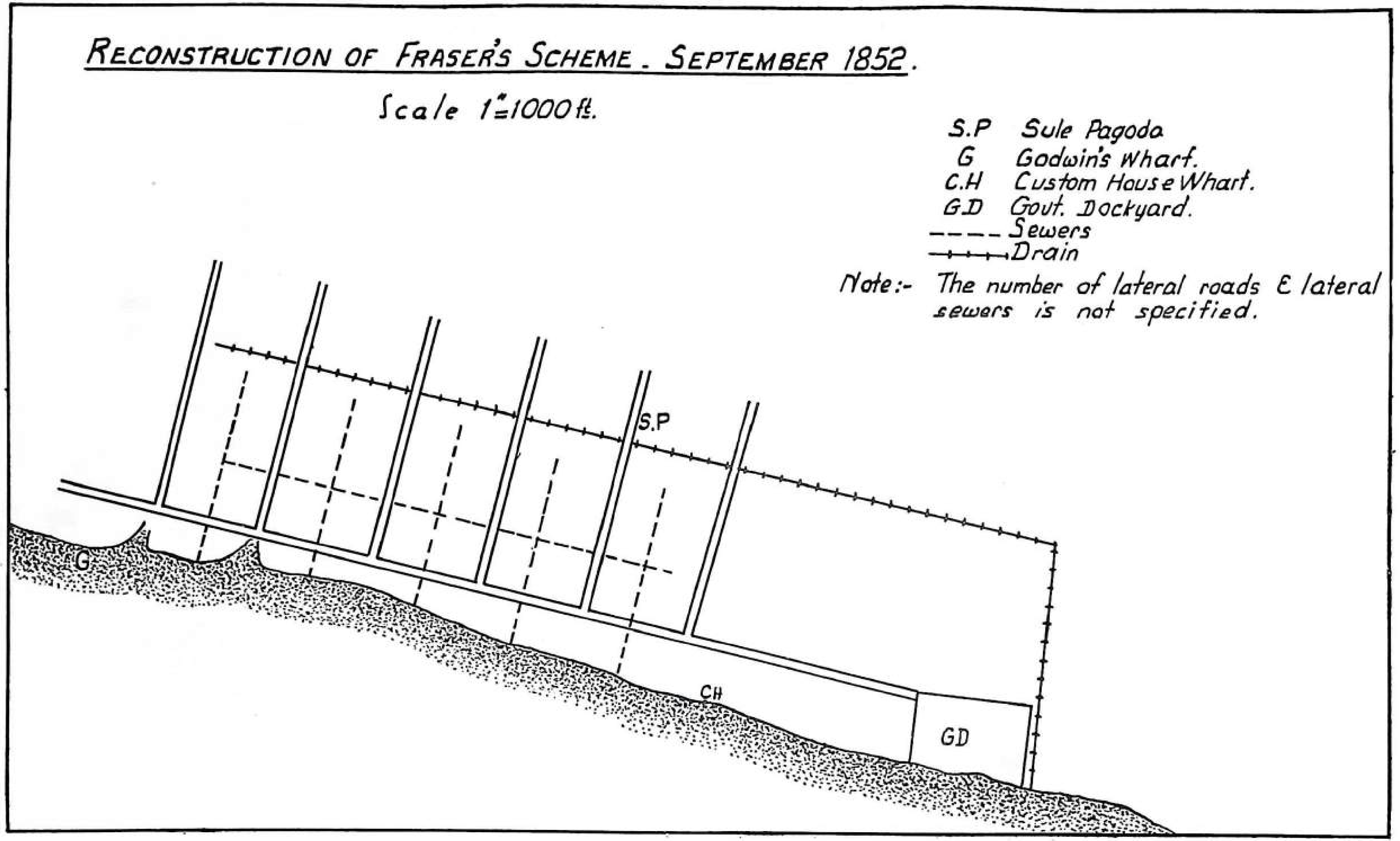
Edwards Street, after Robert Samuel Edwards, Collector of Customs, who, apparently of negro blood, and said to have been once a slave, served in a clerical capacity in Madras, Penang, and Moulmein, and acted as interpreter during the war of 1852, as also during the period of the Residency.

China Street, after the Chinese merchants who settled in the Taroktan quarter.

[1] The regrettable destruction of the older Cantonment records leaves the history of the growth of that area in obscurity.

[2] *Our Monthly* III. p. 328.

PLAN No. 2.


RECONSTRUCTION OF FRASER'S SCHEME. SEPTEMBER 1852.
Scale 1" = 1000 ft.
S.P Sule Pagoda
G Godwin's Wharf.
C.H Custom House Wharf.
G.D Govt. Dockyard.
Sewers
Drain
Note:- The number of lateral roads & lateral sewers is not specified.
S.P
G
CH
GD

Sitke Maung Khine Street, after U Khine, son-in-law of U Tawlay, who was magistrate of Twante after 1852 and died there in 1864.

Latter Street, after Captain Thomas Latter, 67th Bengal N. I., Deputy Commissioner, Prome, who was assassinated December 1853.

Crisp Street, after Charles Malcom Crisp, Postmaster and later Assessor of Income Tax.

Godwin Street, after General Sir Henry Thomas Godwin.

The east-west roads were named

Strand.

Shafraz Road, after a wealthy Armenian contractor and stevedore, who owned the first hotel in Rangoon, erected alongside this Road.

Merchant Street, from the circumstance that it was the main business thoroughfare.

Dalhousie Street, after the Governor-General.

Canal Road, from the projected canal.

Fraser Street, after the designer of the town-plan.

Montgomerie Street, after Dr. William Montgomerie.

Commissioner Road, from the circumstance that Sir Arthur Phayre's residence was placed there.[1]

The selection of those officers who were to be commemorated in this manner is somewhat curious. That Phayre should be so [honoured is reasonable; but why juniors such as Barr? Why General Godwin and not Commodore Lambert? Why, if the Commodore were not allowed to give his name to a street, should Captain Brooking? Why Shafraz and not, for example, a distinguished scholar such as Mason? The selection appears to have been highly arbitrary and thoughtless.

The symmetrical chess-board pattern adopted for the city of Rangoon has evoked much praise; Rangoon, it has been said, "is without question a very well designed and beautiful city" and the plan "showed admirable foresight."[2] There was, however, nothing original about the plan; it was the obvious plan to adopt when building a city *ab initio*,[3] and was, moreover, the

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[1] The street names of Rangoon originally employed the apostrophe: thus *Commissioner Road* of today was known as *Commissioner's Road*, and *Crisp Street* as *Crisp's Street*. The apostrophe has now vanished. In some cases this has been attended with unfortunate results, for *Edwards' Street* has degenerated into *Edward Street*.

It may be noted that *Godwin Street* is now known as *Godwin Road*. The term *Godwin Road* was originally applied only to that portion of the Lanmadaw that lay in the Cantonment area, the town portion of the same being called *Godwin Street*.

[2] *Reports of the Suburban Development Committee, Rangoon*, and the *Departmental Committee on Town Planning, Burma*, pp. v, vi, 15.

[3] *Cf.* Valentine Knight's plan for the rebuilding of London after the Great Fire of 1666: he "designed the whole town divided up in long, narrow blocks which easily could be parcelled out without waste. First, he places two 60 feet broad main streets running from west to east parallel with the river. Then he inserts six cross streets of the same width at a right angle to the river. Each large block arising between these main streets is divided up by secondary streets only 30 feet broad, ten parallel with the river and one at a right angle to it. This will produce blocks of an average size of 500 feet by 70 feet, just big enough to allow two rows of houses separated by a narrow yard" (S. E. Rasmussen: *London* p. 111).

usual plan of the old colonial towns.[1] And it cannot be said that the plan was without defects. The most radical defect is the narrowness of the minor 30 foot roads, which are far too narrow for health and cleanliness, not to mention sightliness, in a tropical city. The back-drainage-spaces, moreover, have little to commend them and should have been made wider by placing the north-south roads farther apart. Again, the paucity of east-west roads is very marked and makes movement about the city difficult. Another obvious defect is the complete absence of radial roads, this absence also impeding movement and rendering the town dull and uninteresting in appearance. More remarkable still is the utter failure to link up the town-plan with the Cantonment road system, which was devised by an independent authority without regard to the plan of the main city. And equally strange is the failure to provide a satisfactory link with the provincial road system. From the first it was realised that provincial roads must be built; although the River, in those pre-Railway days, remained the principal means of transport, still roads were of importance, and as early as January 1854 sanction was accorded for the survey of roads from Rangoon to Pegu and Prome. Yet no attempt was made to carry the great provincial road into the heart of the city, nor even to link up the road and the city in any logical manner. No satisfactory means of egress from and ingress to the city was provided; the Prome Road merely comes to a sudden end, and the traveller today approaching Rangoon by road finds himself, as he nears the city, faced with nothing more alluring than the dismal prospect of the Rangoon Central Gaol. It may at the same time be justly said of Fraser's plan that it might easily have been much worse.

Closely bound up with the planning of the new city was the problem of land rights. Many of the former inhabitants and many new immigrants, Burmese and others, had taken advantage of General Godwin's proclamation allowing temporary occupation of land, and huts and temporary buildings had been erected on the understanding that no claim was thus acquired to the land so used. In some cases, no doubt, former inhabitants had established themselves once more on the sites of their old houses; but the official view was that all land was the property of Government and that therefore the whole town should be treated as vacant land and allocated as Government thought fit. To emphasise the point Phayre, shortly after his arrival, issued the following order dated the 24th December 1852:

> "Notice is hereby given that the whole of the land occupied by the town of Rangoon, together with the adjoining suburbs and vacant lands, as also both banks of the River extending from the mouth of the Panlan Creek to the mouth of the Pegu River is owned by the Government. No buildings now existing or which may hereafter be

[1] *Cf.* E. A. Walker: *The Great Trek*, p. 220, on the planning of Pietermaritzburg, which was laid out "in good old Colonial fashion; a great parallelogram, one and a half miles by one mile, with nine broad straight streets cut across at right angles by five others, and liberal allowance for a market-place and church square."

built without sanction from the authorities will be considered to entitle the occupants to property in the soil they cover. Arrangements are now making for an immediate survey of the town and adjoining country with the view of a regular plan of the town being laid out. When this is completed the manner in which it is proposed to dispose of building lots will be publicly notified. In the meantime all persons are hereby informed that no buildings should be erected without permission from the Magistrate and that due public notice will be given before building lots are disposed of."[1]

The decision that all land was the property of Government and might therefore be disposed of at the will of Government was essential if the new town were to be laid out on the lines proposed, since the plan cut across the old roads and therefore all existing buildings would have to be destroyed. Moreover, in some cases sites had been recently occupied under the terms of the proclamation by other than the original occupants of pre-war days, so that innumerable law-suits might arise, involving litigation which would take years to settle, if any right accruing from former occupancy were recognised. The ultimate benefit of the majority of inhabitants would be best secured, in Phayre's opinion, by a speedy and new settlement such as was now proposed. Moreover, he was not lacking in consideration for the immediate welfare of the inhabitants and was willing that occupants of land should be offered sites of equivalent size at the usual price as near as possible to the area already occupied. The decision, though necessary, not unnaturally caused consternation in some quarters, however, and memorials were submitted by Europeans, Persians, Armenians, Indians, demanding, in the case of Europeans, the recognition of existing occupancy so far as was consistent with the plan of the new town, and in the other cases the maintenance of former rights in the land. No memorials, stated Phayre, were received from any Burmese, who, it may be concluded, thought it useless to petition an alien government. All the claims advanced were, however, firmly rejected.[2]

There then arose the question of the method of disposal of land. It was desirable that some settlement should be arrived at without delay so that the inhabitants might house themselves, so far as possible, before the rains of 1853 commenced; further, money was needed for the construction of the new roads, bridges, drains, and wells. Phayre therefore proposed to sell outright the freehold of the land in the town at fixed rates, the rate being highest in the areas near the River where the business quarter would naturally establish itself, and where he intended to impose rigid restrictions on building-plans so as to reduce the risk of fire. He preferred this method of disposal to sale by auction as being fairer to the poor. The proceeds of the sales, estimated to amount to five lakhs of rupees, should form a Town Fund to be used for

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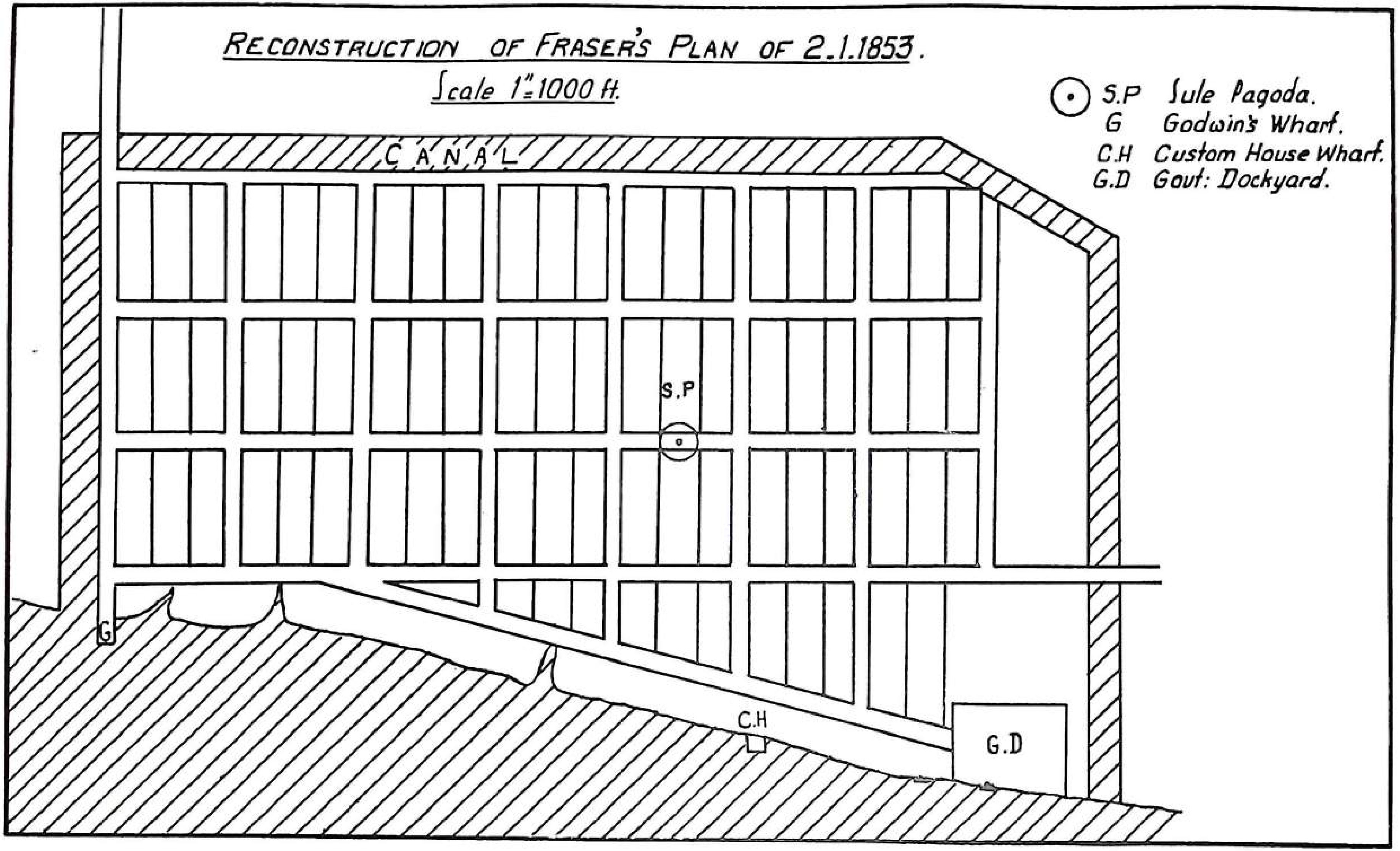
[1] Quoted Hall, *op. cit.*

[2] Letter No. 8 dated 15th March, 1853, from Commissioner, Pegu, to Government of India, Foreign Department.

public works "necessary for the health, comfort, and convenience of the inhabitants." An annual land-tax should be imposed in lieu of the old Burmese capitation-tax, and there should be in addition a monthly municipal tax varying according to the value of the sites. The proceeds of the municipal tax should be utilised to meet the cost of town police and the maintenance, as distinct from the construction, of public works. Phayre desired to commence the collection of both taxes forthwith, but proposed to defer the collection of the purchase price of the land until the 1st January 1854, since many of those desiring to purchase had suffered loss by the war and would require time to pay.

The Government of India accepted Phayre's views about the propriety of selling the land regardless of former occupancy, but did not approve of his plans for the disposal of the proceeds or for the fixing of the rates of sale. Government was of opinion that the town-plan would cost a good deal more than Phayre anticipated, and while "if it should be so, the value gained will be well worth all the cost", yet if those engaged in constructing the town could draw only on a Town Fund of five lakhs formed from the proceeds of land sales, they were likely to be seriously hampered in their work. Further, the necessity for raising money might lead the authorities to sell sites at unduly low rates for the sake of a rapid sale; whereas if sites were disposed of gradually a better price would be obtained. Therefore it was directed that the purchase-price of all sites should go into the Treasury, while the cost of constructing the new town would be borne by Government out of its general funds. Regarding the rates at which land was to be sold, the prices which Phayre wished to fix were considered to be much too low: as a general rule a reserve price of three times the suggested rates should be imposed, while the actual price should be determined by auction. The minimum actually adopted was 3 annas a square foot in the best sites in the business area by the River, where the lots were larger than elsewhere, diminishing to 9 pice in the least desirable. It was admitted that this would deter many from purchasing at the moment, but Government could cheerfully face this prospect since there was no necessity for parting with all the sites too readily. The only exception to the principle of sale by public auction would be made in the case of former inhabitants: though no right of property could be recognised, at the same time some consideration was due to them; therefore those who were definitely known to have occupied certain sites before the War should be granted the sites now occupied by them or equivalent sites at the minimum selling-price, without their having to compete in an auction sale. Among those who so benefited was M. F. Crisp, who was allowed to purchase in this manner a site for a ship-building yard. The actual payment of the purchase-price might, as Phayre had suggested, be deferred until the 1st January 1854; meanwhile sites might be disposed of, though the ownership on the part of Government would be reserved until the full price had been paid.

PLAN No. 3.


RECONSTRUCTION OF FRASER'S PLAN OF 2.1.1853.
Scale 1" = 1000 ft.
S.P Sule Pagoda.
G Godwin's Wharf.
C.H Custom House Wharf.
G.D Govt: Dockyard.
CANAL
S.P
G
C.H
G.D

Similarly the proposals for taxation were modified. Phayre had suggested a municipal tax which should produce Rs. 50,000 a year, and a land-tax in lieu of capitation-tax to produce about Rs. 15, 500 a year.[1] But the capitation-tax had in Burmese days, when it was assessed at Rs. 4 per family, produced a matter of Rs. 50,000 annually, it was stated. Thus Phayre's proposal would divert the greater part of the revenues of Rangoon into the municipal fund, at the expense of Government. As Government was now to bear the cost of the construction of the new town, and as apart from that the inhabitants of Rangoon would benefit more than any others from the newly-established connection with India, and would be best able to contribute to the revenue, it was resolved that the land-tax should be levied at such a rate as would produce the same sum as the capitation-tax: thereafter a municipal tax should be levied at a rate which, it was estimated, would meet the needs of the town administration. The land-tax was in fact fixed at half a pie per square foot, and the municipal tax at Rs. 3-4 as. per lot in the best sites down to 5 annas in the least desirable. In the suburbs different rates were adopted; the price of the best sites was fixed at a minimum of Rs. 1000 an acre; the annual land-tax was fixed at 4 to 1 pie per square foot; and in addition a further tax of Rs. 3 per acre was levied.

A series of "Rules for the grant of Town and Suburban allotments within the jurisdiction of the Town Magistrate of Rangoon," embodying the decisions so far arrived at and further laying down certain municipal regulations were then propounded by the Commissioner; and after some slight modification by the Government of India these Rules were issued.[2] The limits of the jurisdiction of the Town Magistrate were defined as "on the Rangoon side of the Irrawaddy south of a line drawn from the northern extremity of Neikban village in Kemmendine passing to the north of the Thwe-tshe Tank[3] and Royal Lake to the northern extremity of the village of Pazundaung; on the Dalla side over all houses and villages on the bank of the river from the south of the Panlang Creek to opposite the mouth of the Pazundaung creek within a line to be marked out hereafter." Rangoon, small as it was compared with the modern municipal area, thus covered a far wider area than it had in former days and also included, for the first time, Dalla.[4] The Rules for the sale of sites were somewhat modified; it had been intended to demand the purchase money not later than the 1st January 1854, but as it proved impossible to align the roads and mark the sites before the rains of 1853 began, and as occupants could not well be evicted while the

[1] The Government of India commented not unreasonably on this point that "there would appear to have been some error in your first letter on this subject, dated the 15th March last, for in that letter you propose an assessment at the rate of three pies per square foot of the whole lot, which you expected to produce annually Rs. 15,000; but you now propose an assessment at the rate of half a pie per square foot on the area of the lot which you calculate will produce upon the dwellings of 36,000 people Rs. 33,518" (No. 3145, dated 15th July, 1853, from Foreign Department to the Commissioner, Pegu).

[2] Letter No. 20, dated 6th June, 1853, from Commissioner, Pegu, to Foreign Department; No. 3145, dated 15th July, 1853, from Foreign Department to Commissioner, Pegu.

[3] *i.e.* the "Scotch Tank."

[4] See Map VI: The Boundaries of the Municipality.

rains continued, it was necessary to postpone the allotment of sites by auction for some months, and hence the Rules prescribed that half the purchase-money should be payable at the new year of 1854 and the remainder not later than 1st January 1855. After the initial disposal of sites, a similar provision for future sales, allowing twelve months for the payment of final instalments, was adopted. Failure to complete the second payment would involve forfeiture of the land. In was further required that "a good and *bona fide* dwelling house or warehouse must be erected upon each allotment within one year from the date of sale or allotment, failing which the lot will be liable to resumption by Government," but the original purchase-price would under such circumstances be refunded. The object of this rule was to prevent speculation in sites. In the business area only brick buildings with tiled roofs might be erected; but a period of two, or in the case of sites farthest from the River three, years was allowed before the permanent roofing need be erected, owing, no doubt, to the difficulty of obtaining tiles locally; and during this period temporary roofs of whitewashed mats or of other material covered with mud might be used: failure to use such material would involve the compulsory unroofing of the building, while failure to complete a pukka roof in the prescribed time would involve double municipal taxation, while if failure persisted longer than two or three years confiscation would ensue. "This rule," noted the Commissioner, "is very necessary in a country where fires are from the generally combustible nature of the materials used in the construction of houses, exceedingly destructive." The Rules also provided that ground should be reserved for markets and a space by the River set aside as a fish-market. For the sake of hygiene "no buffaloes, oxen, cows, or pigs will be allowed to be kept on any lot within the town; nor will any slaughter-house or manufactory which is offensive or injurious to public health be allowed to be established; nor will the burning or burying of the dead be permitted within the town." Later a restriction on the keeping of gunpowder was added, the amount to be kept in any one place not to exceed twelve pounds. It was also provided that the land and municipal taxes should be collected as from the 1st May 1853 even from temporary occupants who had not acquired land by purchase from the authorities; the urgent need for money for such purposes as police and the circumstance that taxes were already being collected in other parts of the Pegu Division justified this step. For the benefit of the poorer, the Rules further provided that unsold building-sites might be leased by the year.

It may be noted that these Rules were clearly not enforced immediately, for burials within the town limits appear to have continued in at least one cemetery as late as February 1854, though there is no evidence of burials there after that month, and at the Botataung Pagoda for yet another year.[1]

[1] See Appendix C: *The Crisp family;* and Appendix D: *European Cemeteries in Rangoon.*

The allotment of town-sites appears to have proceeded rapidly; by the end of 1853 most of the sites in the blocks between the Strand and Merchant Street had been disposed of, and in the majority of cases the whole purchase price had been received; and a good deal had been allotted, though not yet completely paid for, in the blocks on each side of the Sule Pagoda Road. A number of free grants had also been made; the American Baptist Mission had been allotted a free site at the south-west corner of Merchant and Phayre Streets; the Armenian Church was given a site at the south-west corner of Merchant and Sparks Streets; at the north-west corner of Dalhousie and Phayre Streets a Hindu Temple was granted a free site; a "Mogul Mosque" was given a site on the south side of Dalhousie Street between 29th and 30th Streets; and sites were given also to the "Soortees Mosque" at the south-west corner of Dalhousie and Mogul Streets, the Synagogue on the south of Dalhousie Street between 25th and 26th Streets, the "Thaingee" on the north side of Dalhousie Street between 26th and Edwards Streets, the Chinese Temple on the same side of that street between 20th and Latter Streets, the "Foken Chinese Temple" on the Strand between 18th and Crisp Streets, and the Convent on the north side of Fraser Street between Maung Tawlay and 31st Streets. Of these, all were given exemption from taxation, as well as from purchase-price, except the Convent and the Soortee Mosque. By January 1854 the sales of sites were going so well that nearly two lakhs of rupees had been received, and when Lord Dalhousie visited the province early in 1854 he showed much pleasure at the progress which had been made, for he noted, "Many sales have already taken place, and purchases made at a higher rate than the upset price, a very correct test of the real value of the lot and consequently of the fairness of the minimum price..... So far as experience has yet shown, and so far as a conclusion may be drawn from facts, the footing on which the sale of building lots in and near Rangoon has now been placed is sound and fair, and affords no real grounds for complaint," though he admitted that the rates of sale "are no doubt too high to please those who flattered themselves that they would obtain large and first-rate sites and frontages in a great future port for next to nothing."[1]

The construction of the town on the lines proposed was, however, a work of years. Pending construction, Rangoon appears to have been a very unpleasant place to live in. Phayre's first view of it was not encouraging: "roads very dusty—numbers of people are collected and mat houses apparently just as numerous as ever".[2] The only substantial buildings were the *kyaungs* most of which were in use as quarters for the troops, for the civil officers, and as offices. Thus "we found the Artillery mess established in an elegant building of moderate dimensions, supported by eight massive pillars

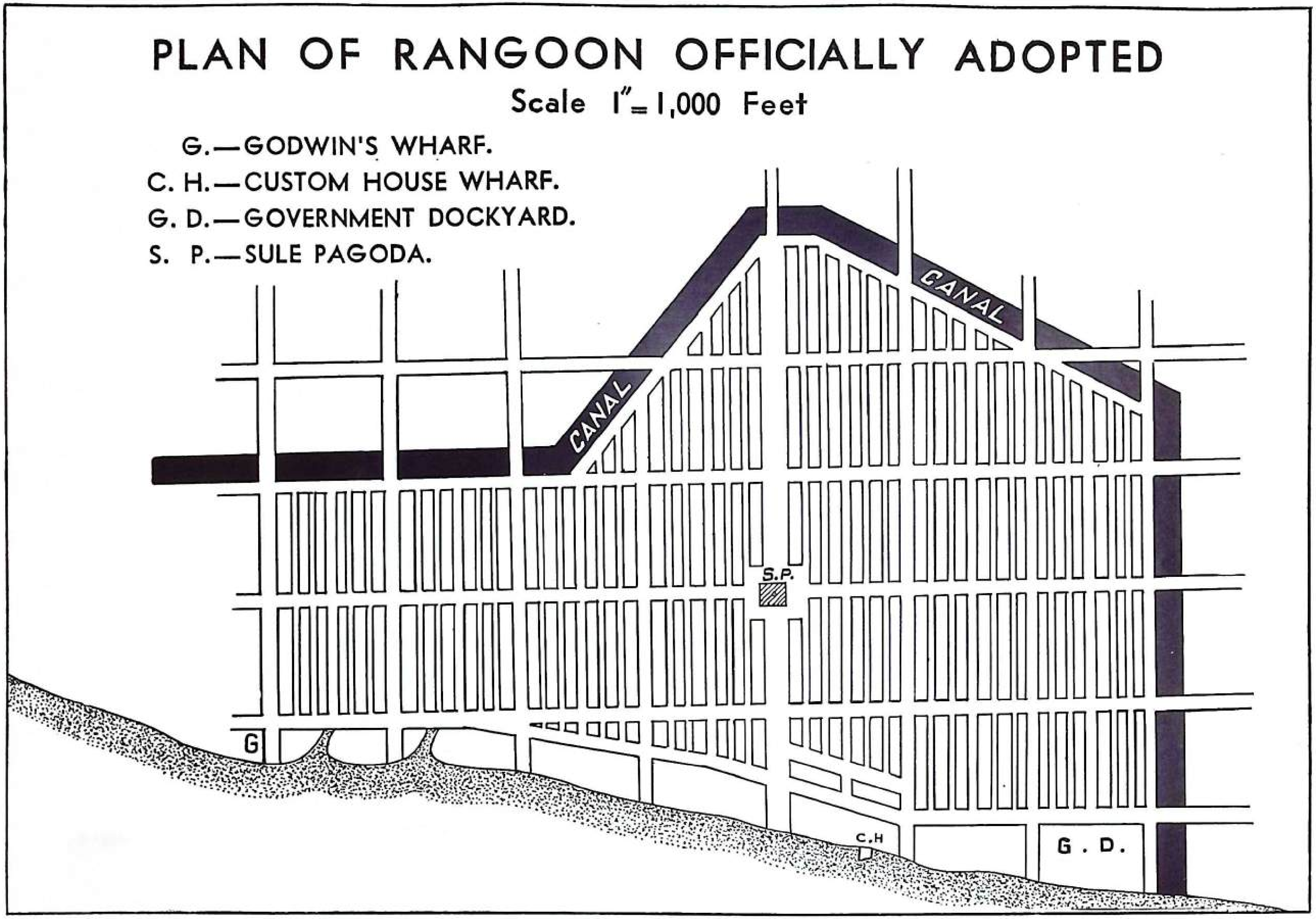
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[1] Hall *op. cit.*, letter dated 20th January, 1854. Letter No. 103, dated 13th January, 1854, from Foreign Department to Commissioner, Pegu.

[2] Phayre *Ms. Diary* 19th December, 1852.

and the whole of the inside of the fabric being gilded."[1] Phayre's own quarters consisted of "fine kyaungs on a plain south of the stockade,"[2] and his office was in a *kyaung* at the corner of the present Commissioner Road and Pagoda Road, the offices of the Deputy Commissioner and of the Treasury being in a *kyaung* to the north of this; these buildings were on land now occupied by the Government High School. The Magistrate's court was in a *kyaung* at a point where Fraser Street crosses Pagoda Road. Apart from the *kyaungs* and the timber barracks erected for the troops, there seem to have been none but bamboo huts in Rangoon at this period. In contrast to the optimism which Lord Dalhousie expressed in January 1854, a traveller who visited the town later in the same year, during the rains, found very little to commend. "The view of the town from the river was anything but imposing," he wrote. "It seemed to consist of a number of miserable huts erected indiscriminately about the place, without any attempt at order or arrangement." There was a hotel, curiously named "The Railway Hotel" although there was no railway; but it was only "a hut constructed of matting, roofed with leaves," on a swampy site. On payment of Rs. 5 the guest could stay the night there, but he had to find his own bed. It had a licence to sell liquor, and its billiard room was the resort of the drunkards of the town. "Every vestige of the old city of Rangoon (except some portion of its brick pavements, some of its wells, a select few of its pagodas and shrines, and a small number of Kyoungs or Burmese monasteries), had been utterly destroyed. Ancient kyoungs within the stockade had been preserved and appropriated for public offices and the residence of the most consequential of the military authorities, and some dilapidated buildings, (one the late palace of the Burmese Governor), had been converted into commissariat godowns, or warehouses, and barracks for the clerks. Many government employees immediately after the proclamation of peace and annexation, had no habitations assigned them on shore, and at first were compelled to live on board the vessels lying in the river, pending the erection of temporary huts for their residence, near the stockade. Those persons unconnected with government, who were desirous of settling in the country, had to provide themselves with the means of shelter as they best could, whilst the soldiers were encamped in their tents." At the time of his visit, he noted, within the cantonment limits substantial barracks and other buildings had been erected, but "near the river, in what might at present be termed the business quarter of the town, there was not a single private residence of any pretension........ There did not appear to be any regular roads about Rangoon except a narrow one which led towards an elevation upon which stood the ruins of a pagoda, terminating in a partially cleared way conducting to two other roads, the highway to Kemmendine, and the road to the stockade and Shoay da Goung pagoda. There were sundry roads laid out and partially levelled,

[1] *ibid.* 21st December, 1852.
[2] *ibid.* 23rd December, 1852.


PLAN OF RANGOON OFFICIALLY ADOPTED
Scale 1" = 1,000 Feet
G.—GODWIN'S WHARF.
C. H.—CUSTOM HOUSE WHARF.
G. D.—GOVERNMENT DOCKYARD.
S. P.—SULE PAGODA.
CANAL
CANAL
S.P.
G
C.H
G. D.

leading to the different districts of the town and cantonments, but no proper roads had hitherto been constructed. There were some narrow alleys bricked along, which once formed some of the streets of the old Burmese city, but these were cut up pretty considerably during the war, and were now by no means pleasant paths for promenading...... Our way lay over a tract of uneven ground, about which were scattered all sorts of offal and rubbish. In some places the soil had been dug up, and we were obliged to jump over deep gutters, and apparently bottomless pits.... Thus we had to make our way amongst squashy mud heaps, treacherous bogs, filthy pools, over broken bricks, logs of wood, etc., occasionally leaping on to some insolated piece of comparatively firm ground at the risk of slipping, on our feet touching the wet surface, or finding ourselves deceived in regard to its consistency".

To the south-east of the Dockyard, at Botataung, an enterprising builder who took advantage of the housing shortage, had erected a "treble range" of wooden barracks, commonly known as "Godfree's Range," which he had partitioned off into separate apartments and rented at an enormous rent; and nearby was a bazaar where beef, poultry, fish, vegetables, rice, ngapi, and other food-stuffs were sold. The bazaar had been built by the owner of the Range, who let the stalls daily to the bazaar sellers. "It seemed to me, as I passed, to be an exceedingly dirty place, and not at all sweet smelling; the odour of ngapi being decidedly obnoxious." There was a larger bazaar near the stockade also, and a Government bazaar for the sale of fish on the Strand. There was only one shop of any size, "a large rambling edifice of bamboo and thatch," comprising the general store of Messrs. Jordan & Co.[1]

However, Lord Dalhousie, who visited Rangoon again in the following year, 1855, noted that the public improvements were being pursued "with vigour." "The improvement which has been effected in the town and cantonment of Rangoon is most striking," he wrote. "The town has its streets regularly laid out, and many of them are already formed. The Strand road is nearly completed, and with the other town roads is at present in excellent order. The houses are regularly built, many pukka buildings are finished, and very many more are in progress. The streets are named. Drainage is provided for, and lamp-posts for lighting the town are erected. The land has been readily disposed of either by sale or lease, and the price or rent has been promptly and easily paid. ..... I have only to add that what I have now seen confirms the conviction I have entertained from the first, that Rangoon will ere long become one of the most beautiful cities and stations within the whole bounds of India."[2]

It was unfortunate that a fire which occurred in December of that year should have done a great deal of damage, estimated by Phayre at five or six lakhs but by the local press at fifteen lakhs; this occurrence must have given a marked set-back to the development of the new city.

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[1] Marshall: *Four years in Burma*, I. 257, sqq.

[2] *India Secret Proceedings*, 28th December, 1855, No. 10.

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CHAPTER TEN

MODERN RANGOON: 1855—1874.

THE development of the town did not precisely follow the lines laid down by Lieutenant Fraser and approved by Government. It was found impossible to establish the proposed system of sewers, for it was rightly judged, on further consideration, that "it would be a fatal mistake to construct sewers leading to the river to discharge their foetid contents upon the bank," since even though the tide might prevent any serious contamination of the river-water, still the Strand would be rendered offensive by the ejection of sewage on the shore. The problem of sewage disposal was therefore shelved for the time being,[1] and as a natural corollary the projected canal running around three sides of the town was not completed, for apart from its inutility in the absence of sewers, there was fear that it might intercept the supply of pure water which percolated from the high ground near the Pagoda into the town wells and render these useless through contamination with river-water. On the eastern side of the town the canal seems never to have been even attempted, and though on the west and north a good deal of excavation was carried out, the object was largely to provide earth for raising the lower-lying building-sites near the River, and the canal never developed into much more than a series of tanks which were gradually filled in during the course of years, the last surviving section in the town proper being the tank behind the old Hospital which, "an evil-smelling, insanitary nuisance," was filled in during the year 1894-95.[2]

Apart from the canal, however, the ground-plan was adhered to. An enormous amount of work was thus entailed, for nearly the whole town had to be raised two or three feet. A light tramway was established to carry earth from the upper part to the lower part of the town, and a good deal of the filling in of swamps and raising of the level was effected besides with town rubbish. The amount of earth transported in this manner amounted in one year to over four million cubic feet.[3] The cost of the work was met by the funds received from the sale of town building-sites, the proceeds of which were credited to the Town Works Fund; and later, from 1860 onwards, by the rents derived from the holders of short-term leases and from squatters who, being unable to purchase land, were allowed to rent plots where they could build huts on condition that they would vacate on three months' notice in the event of the sale of the land. These rents had formerly been credited to

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[1] *Selections from Papers Regarding the Laying Out of the Town of Rangoon:* Memorandum by Commissioner of Pegu, dated 31st March, 1856.

[2] *Annual Report on the Working of the Rangoon Municipality,* 1894-95.

[3] *Annual Report on the Administration of British Burma,* 1866-67.

general provincial revenues, but the two sources of supply, rent and proceeds of sales, were now combined to form the Rangoon Land Sale and Rent Fund. When, however, the area of the town-proper came to be fairly well occupied and the rate of building consequently declined, receipts from land-sales fell off, and as early as 1868-69 it was recorded that expenditure on new works was restricted for want of funds. However, by about 1870 the reclamation was nearly completed within the limits of Fraser's original scheme. Apart from the canal, the only marked variation from his plan was the preservation of a vacant site, known originally as Tank Square, near the Sule Pagoda, which in 1867-68 was cleared and levelled and laid out as a public recreation-ground under the name of Fytche Square, the name being selected in honour of the Chief Commissioner of British Burma of that day, Sir Albert Fytche. A small remnant of the old swamp to the south of the Pagoda remained, however, for some years in the form of a tank within the gardens.

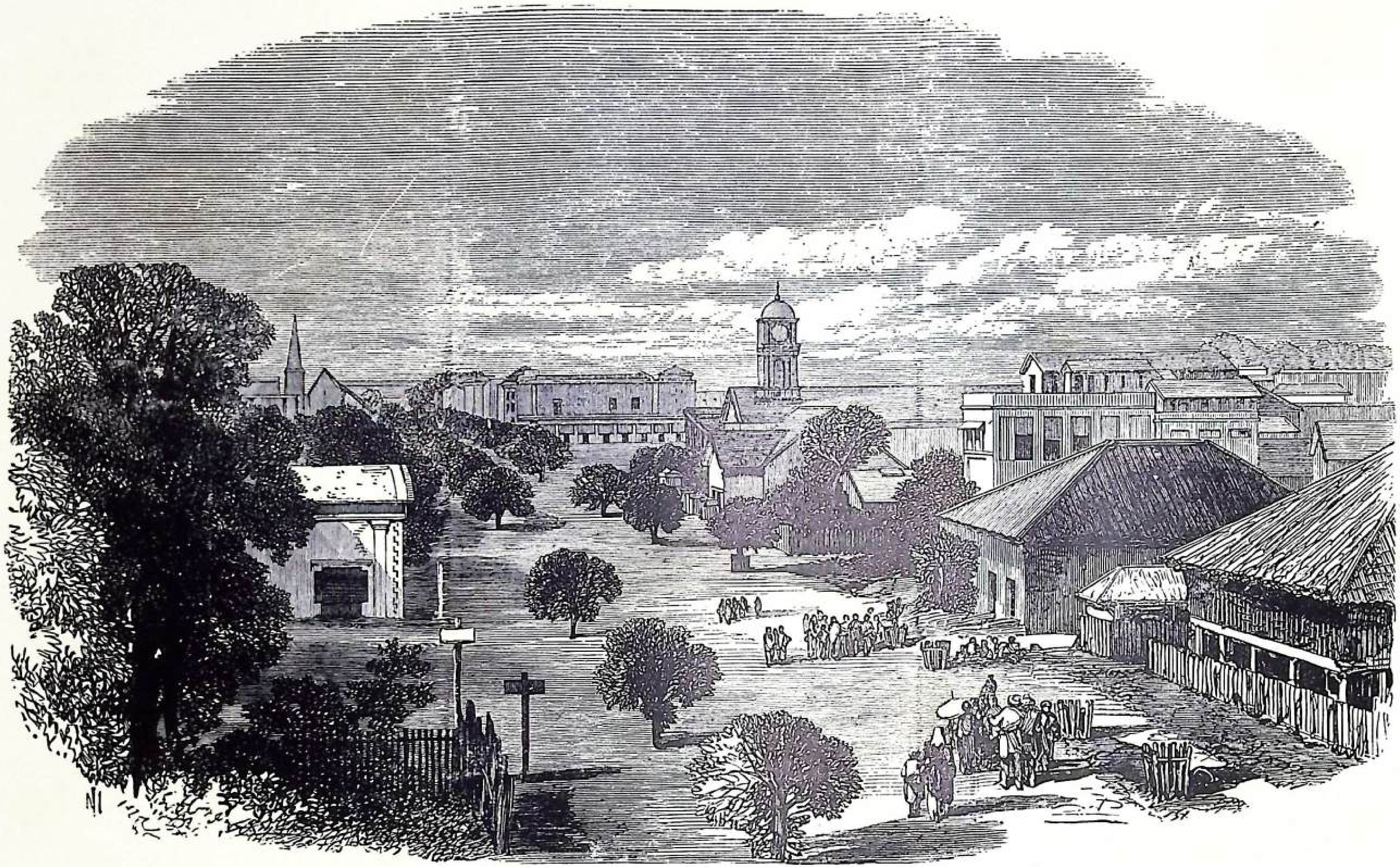
The creation of the town involved a great deal of work in the construction of new roads. By September 1858 thirty-six miles of road had been made, of which twelve miles had been metalled; and by 1874 some fifty miles of road had been prepared. The progress of road-making was slow, however, for many of these roads were not for some years metalled. Originally attempts were made to metal them with brick, and later with burnt clay; but these forms of metalling did not resist the wear and tear of the traffic, and the result was that, as the Executive Engineer complained, "while the strength of the Public Works Department is almost exhausted in keeping existing roads in repair, it will be impossible to attempt the systematic completion of the general plan."[1] It is significant of the slow progress of the work that it was not till the year 1864-65 that the Strand Road was in any sense completed, while even then it had not been properly metalled.

Progress in the erection of public buildings was also somewhat slow, though the construction of sound buildings was very necessary in a town which, being built largely of timber, was peculiarly liable to fires of an extensive nature. Thus although the fire of December 1855 had done much damage, another fire which occurred in October 1857 and destroyed two blocks of buildings including the Surati Bazaar, was reported to be due to the use of grass-thatch as roofing, the rules prohibiting the employment of such material not having been enforced. Measures were thereafter taken for the enforcement of the law; but Rangoon remained lacking in fire-fighting appliances, though the need had been foreseen by Montgomerie and Fraser, both of whom had proposed to establish a water-system that would feed fire-engines. The employment of such mechanism was left entirely to private enterprise, and when fires occurred Rangoon was dependent on such assistance as the engines of the rice and timber mills could give. Nevertheless, the erection of *pukka* buildings proceeded at a slow pace. Sir Albert Fytche reported that "when I

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[1] *Selections from Papers;* report dated 10th September, 1858.

PLATE No. 18



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MERCHANT STREET, 1869.

took charge of this province in the early part of 1867 the gaols and civil courts were mere huts, while the public offices at Rangoon were in embryo"[1]. It was, indeed, not till the end of the seventh decade of the century that official business could be transacted in suitable accommodation.

Most of the offices which were erected were sited between the Sule Pagoda and the River. The British Burma Secretariat was on the Strand, in a building completed in 1867 which became in turn the Telegraph Office from 1895 onwards and the Postmaster General's office after 1917. Next to the Secretariat was the Treasury and Deputy Commissioner's office in a brick building erected by M. F. Crisp, on a site later used for the Post Office and now for the office of the Motor Vehicles Department of the Rangoon Police and other public departments. Behind these buildings, facing Merchant Street, was the original Post Office. On the other side of Sule Pagoda Road, on the site now occupied by the Reserve Bank, was the Court of the Recorder, the Recordership having been established in 1863 for the adjudication of more important civil cases and the trial of sessions cases within the limits of Rangoon. On the site of the present new Law Courts were the Public Offices, and next along the Strand the Custom House. The Roman Catholic Cathedral, completed in 1859, lay at the corner of Merchant Street and Fytche Square, where the office of the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation now stands[2]. The American Baptist Mission Church stood in Phayre Street at the junction of Merchant Street on the site now occupied by Messrs. P. Orr & Sons. The Armenian Church stood, as it still does, on Merchant Street at the corner of Sparks Street. The Chief Commissioner vacated the *kyaung* in which he first lived, and, after occupying for a time a building on Commissioner Road, usually known as "Phayre Lodge", now the residence of the Head Master of the Government High School, moved in the 1860's into a timber house in the compound of the modern Government House. An Anglican Church was built; services had for a time been held in a *kyaung* in the Cantonments on the east side of Voyle Road[3], but in 1855 the Bishop of Calcutta laid the foundation-stone of a Church of St. Andrew on a site near the end of Barr Street, close to the public offices. This Church was, however, never actually built, and services were held for a period in a small wooden building in the town until in 1857 the small attendance and the disrepair into which the building had fallen led to the closing down of these activities. A Town Church Committee, consisting of Captain Brooking, C. M. Crisp, Lieut. S. T. Trevor (Executive Engineer), and G. B. Howard, was then appointed, and this Committee arranged for the exchange of the original site in favour of another farther west; and in 1865 the Holy Trinity Church, designed by Captain J. M. Williams, Executive Engineer, was

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[1] Fytche: *Burma Past and Present*, II. 132-3.

[2] See Plate No. 18, showing Merchant Street, looking westwards towards Fytche Square; the Roman Catholic Cathedral is distinguished by a tower.

[3] See Plate No. 19 — *The Church, 1855.*

completed on a site by the River between the Strand, Mogul Street, Merchant Street, and 27th Street, where formerly the Government fish-market had stood[1]. In the Cantonments the existing iron church was erected in 1857, the Governor-General, Lord Dalhousie, having subscribed Rs. 500 towards its cost, though, to prove his impartiality, he also subscribed Rupees 250 towards the regilding of the Shwe Dagon. The Roman Catholic Church of St. John was built in the Cantonments in the same period and also came into use in 1857. A charitable dispensary was opened in a wooden building by the River as early as 1854 in conjunction with a seamen's hospital, under the management of Dr. Dawson, a missionary, who acted as honorary superintendent. Ships' captains and owners subscribed to the upkeep of this establishment; but Dr. Dawson was so severely attacked in the local press in regard to the accounts of the institution that he resigned his office. The Civil Surgeon, Dr. A. J. Cowie, succeeded him, but the lack of subordinate staff and the heavy official duties which prevented Dr. Cowie from giving much time to the institution led to its being closed. After that, residents of Rangoon who needed hospital treatment had to enter the gaol hospital where they paid Rupees 5 a day for the same treatment as the convicts received for nothing. A committee was therefore appointed in 1856, consisting of the Deputy Commissioner, Captain C. D. Grant, the Civil Surgeon, Dr. J. E. Dickenson, and the Superintending Surgeon of the Pegu Division, Dr. J. Forsyth, to consider plans for a new hospital; and this committee proposed that a new building be erected on the north of Commissioner Road between China Street and Mogul Street; but this plan was abandoned, and in 1860 the combined dispensary and hospital were reopened under the charge of a sub-assistant surgeon subject to the supervision of the Civil Surgeon. The building was poor and insanitary, but the number of patients increased from 129 in-patients and 592 out-patients in 1860-61 to 534 in-patients and 5,315 out-patients in 1865-66. It was not till 1873 that a General Hospital, consisting of "some handsome teak structures", was erected on Commissioner Road where its buildings still stand as the hostel of the Burma Government Medical School. It was a very well equipped institution by the standards of those days and was, in the words of the Chief Commissioner, "a credit to the town". A lunatic asylum was completed in 1870 alongside St. John's Road, opposite the wooden gaol which was one of the first buildings erected after 1852 and which stood on the site of the modern gaol. On the site of the present General Hospital was the garden of the Agri-Horticultural Society, established in 1865; this Society held annual fruit, flower, and vegetable shows for many years; and within its gardens was the Phayre Museum, completed in 1871, partly by public subscription as a testimonial to Sir Arthur Phayre, and partly by a government grant of £ 500. The building was designed by Mr. H. M. Matthews, Executive Engineer, and was sited appropriately opposite

[1] See Plate No. 20 — *Trinity Church.*

[2] *Annual Report on the Administration of British Burma,* 1873 — 74.

the Chief Commissioner's former residence. The Museum was supported by Government with a grant of £ 10 a year[1]. Of places of recreation and amusement, the principal was the Assembly Rooms, built where the Jubilee Hall now is; it was "a huge, barn-like structure" of timber, but had magnificent chandeliers and wall-lamps, was equipped with sofas and lounges, and had a library and billiard-room[2]. It had been built in 1854-55 by shareholders, but was never a financial success and had ten years later to be taken over by the Cantonment Magistrate. There was also the Young Men's Literary Society, instituted in 1857, which had "a large lending library containing many excellent standard works and is of much use in encouraging a taste for sound literature. The class of works which it contains and which are taken out and read", the *Administration Report* for 1868-69 ambiguously continues, "is far higher than would be supposed". This Society received a subvention of thirty pounds a year from Government until 1878, when it was in a sufficiently flourishing condition for this support to be withdrawn. It had also received in 1873 a grant of Rs. 2,500 for buildings. It changed its name in 1870 to "The Rangoon Literary Society" under which it is still known. Another public amenity was Dalhousie Park, the area around the Royal Lakes, which Lord Dalhousie, being "much impressed with the beauty of the scenery, and the great and enjoyable advantages which it will add to the residence of those whose duty will bring them to Rangoon", had ordered to be reserved for the public use. Plans for laying out the grounds were made in 1856 by Mr. William Scott of the Calcutta Botanic Gardens, and a drive encircling the Lake was proposed; but the Dalhousie Park Committee appointed by Government for the care of the area appears to have failed to carry out the Governor-General's intentions, and only a short and narrow drive was made, while the Park in general "was almost entirely covered with jungle, and was swarming with snakes". Encroachments occurred, Chinese market gardens occupied parts of the Park, and the original area had thus diminished from over 400 acres to about 300 when, in 1871, the Town Magistrate, Captain Evanson, had the drive widened and extended; but the limited funds at his disposal prevented any real development. The most popular open space, in those days when the mass of population of all classes lived in the centre of the town, was the Strand, which was a favourite place for evening drives[3].

The people of Rangoon had another valuable open space in the *maidan*, the parade ground of the garrison, which, though not a public park, was used for certain public amusements, notably racing. From the earliest days of British Rangoon, the officers of the garrison organised race-meetings. There is evidence of a meeting in 1858, when a "Monsoon Meeting" was held, which ended up with two pony steeplechases and, curiously, an elephant

[1] See Plate No. 21 — *Phayre Museum.*

[2] *Our Monthly*, III. 402. See Plate No. 22. *The Assembly Rooms.*

[3] Gordon: *Our Trip to Burmah*, p. 48.

steeplechase[1]. The ponies employed were generally Shan ponies, brought down, as they had been for centuries, to Rangoon by Shan traders, who had their centre near Kemmendine in the neighbourhood of Shan Road which derives its name from a Shan village situated there. The meetings appear to have been semi-private occasions, however, and there was no Turf Club and there were no regularly organised meetings for many years.

Education in Rangoon received a certain amount of official encouragement from the beginning of the new régime. A Government School was opened in a thatched shed in the town in 1856, with the Rev. Mr. Rose in charge, aided by two assistants; but the school, whose work was primarily vernacular instruction, was prohibited from giving an English education to more than thirty-five pupils, and this restriction drove many parents to send their children to inefficient private schools. By the end of the year 1860-61 the school not unnaturally had only some thirty pupils, and it was then closed. Better work was done by the religious bodies. Bishop Bigandet, who was in Rangoon from 1856 till his death in 1894, founded St. Paul's School when, in 1859, he obtained the services of three Brothers from Calcutta, who began teaching in a small building near his residence. In 1861 the school had already outgrown this accommodation and in May 1861 was moved to a small building between 35th Street and Barr Street. The American Baptist Mission Normal School founded at Kemmendine by Mr. Vinton also did good work. In 1862 the Anglican Diocesan Schools were founded on a site at Pagoda Road, granted by Government, under the auspices of the Society for the

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[1] See Plate No. 22.

"The officers of the garrison at Rangoon wound up their 'Monsoon Meeting' with two pony steeplechases and an elephant steeplechase, which were to have come off on the anniversary of the birthday of our most gracious Queen, but the state of the weather caused the postponement to the 25th May.

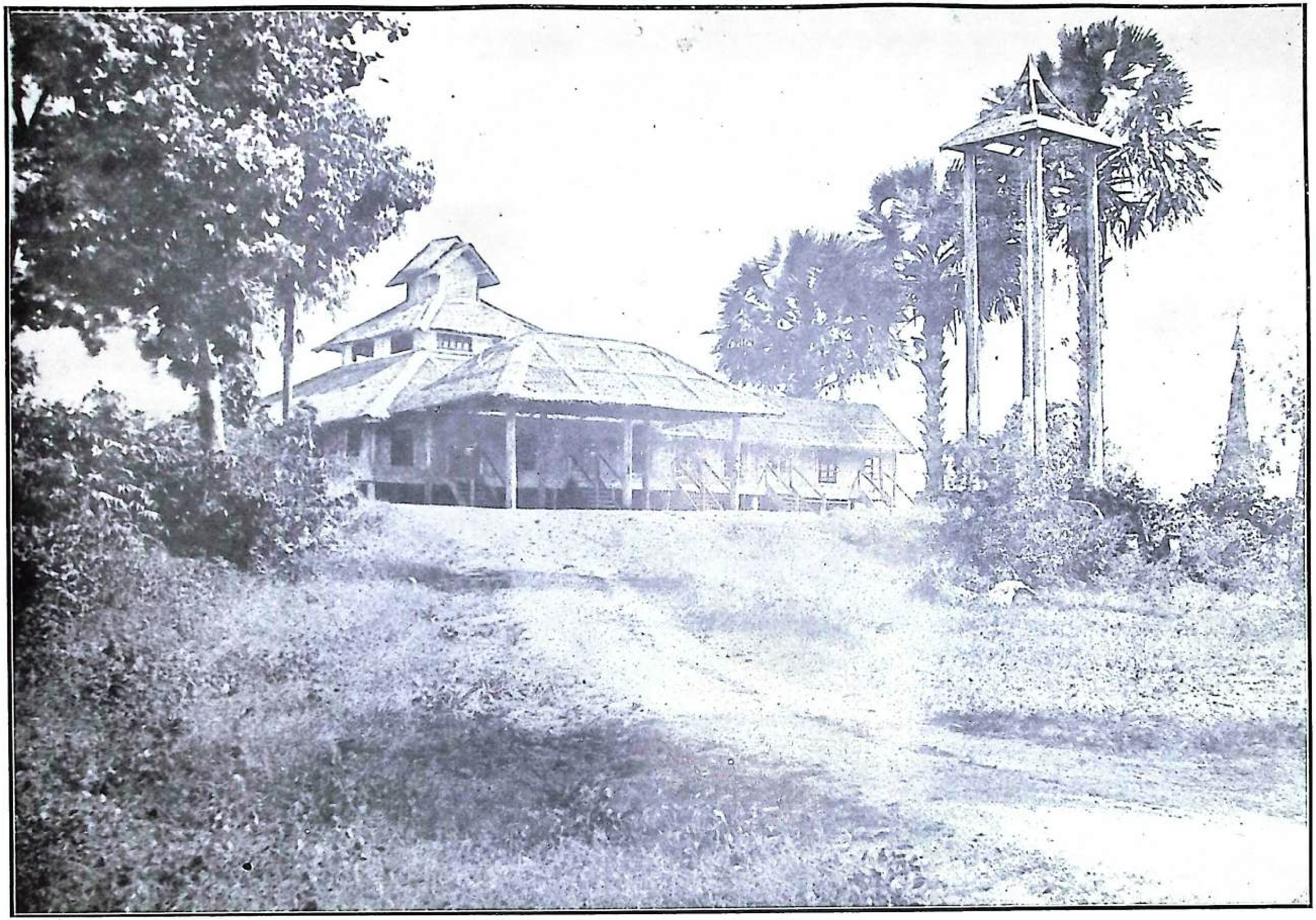
"The ditch is the third leap, though the first in the picture. It was three feet and a half deep by seven broad. 'Grainbags,' who was heavily backed, was the first in, and out again; and not one, that I observed, cleared it. They all went at it like — elephants! and the riders, I do declare, evinced rare powers of 'sticking'! They were in jockey costume, but rode with a staff and flag instead of a whip.

"I subjoin the 'card' of the steeplechase; and I think it only fair to state that, in my opinion, the artist, having heavily backed the 'favourites', which happen to be those making most play, allowed his pencil to be carried away, a little, by his feelings, when he was portraying them." .*(Card)* "Elephant Steeplechase (Catch Weight): A Steeplechase of 1r., H. M. 68th Steeplechase Course, open to all Elephants, steered by Mahouts, and ridden by Officers, the winning Mahout toreceive 5 rs. from the stakes, and the rider the balance and a 'piece of plate' from the staff. The decision of the stewards to be final. The elephants will be mounted opposite the Grand Stand. Those mounting will draw lots for elephants on the course."

"The following was the result —

Captain Vaughan's Soorul Jamal	1
Mr. Marshall's Delhi Bully	2
Major West's Tearing Villain	3
Mr. Harrison's Shuffling Jimmy	4
Mr. Sandeman's Ghurreeb Purwar	5
Mr. Stuart's Slashing Tom	6
Captain Light's Daisy Clipper	7
Captain White's Lall Singh	8
Mr. Blain's Pandey	9
Major Morart's Blowhard	10
Captain Ewart's Grainbags	11
Lieutenant Kay's Smiler	12
Lieutenant Foord's Ponderous Polly	13

Captain E. A. B. Travers, Secretary."
(*Illustrated London News* 25th September, 1858).



Tripe: Photographs from Burmah.

RANGOON: THE CHURCH, 1855.

Promotion of Christian Knowledge; these schools were dual in character, and the boys' and girls' departments were separated by a wooden fence. They were under the management of a committee which included Sir Arthur Phayre and T. P. Sparks.[1] The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel founded St. John's College in 1864 with the Rev. J. E. Marks in charge; the school occupied its present site in 1869, and nine years later an offshoot of the College, St. Michael's School, was established at Kemmendine. In 1866 a girls' school, St. Mary's, was founded by Miss Cook; and in 1872 the American Baptist Mission School, now known as Cushing High School after Mr. J. N. Cushing who was Principal from 1894 to 1906, was formed.

The formation of the Department of Public Instruction in 1866 gave a stimulus to educational work. The grant-in-aid system was adopted, and grants were made also for buildings. Thus a sum of Rs. 20,000 was given to St. Paul's School and on the 1st January 1868 a new school was opened near the Sule Pagoda, on a site where the City Hall now stands.[2] St. Paul's was probably the most flourishing school in Rangoon at this time, and by 1872 the daily attendance was 245, mainly European and Anglo-Indian boys, who were instructed in English, Ancient History, Geography, Arithmetic, Algebra, Euclid, and that now-forgotten subject, the use of the globes. Government in 1867 established a Training School which in 1874 developed into the Government High School with a training class attached to it. The School, opened originally in Phayre Lodge, was under the charge of Mr. J. H. Gilbert, who had been a successful head master of the Town School at Moulmein. In 1873 a Government School for Burmese girls was opened.

For its better instruction the town also had the advantage, from the earliest days, of a public press. On the 5th January 1853 Mr. H. W. Lewis, a lawyer from Moulmein, who had owned a newspaper called the *Maulmain Chronicle*, began publishing the *Rangoon Chronicle*, which appeared on Wednesdays and Saturdays and could be purchased for Rs. 3 a month. Lewis was not an expert journalist, and most of his leading articles were written by contributors who had some axe to grind. His journal thus contained violent attacks on the Government, couched in language unknown in the less plain-spoken newspapers of present-day Rangoon; and ultimately he was silenced by the gift of an official appointment. The *Chronicle* then passed to other hands and, indeed, changed hands frequently, one of its owners being R. Godfree, owner of "Godfree's Range." The bad name which the *Chronicle* had earned survived a change of name to the *Pegu Gazette*, and, together with the preference of readers for the Calcutta press, led to the collapse of the paper in 1858. It was, however, shortly afterwards revived

[1] The two departments of the Diocesan Schools were separated in 1894, when the girls' department was removed first to Keighly Street, then to two houses in Lancaster and York Roads, then to two houses in Sandwith Road, and in 1907 to Signal Pagoda Road. The present buildings were occupied in 1931.

[2] St. Paul's School moved to its present site in 1885.

as the *Rangoon Times* which has continued in existence till today; but the views of the *Times* did not always meet the approval of the local merchants, who in 1861 started the *Rangoon Gazette* as a bi-weekly in opposition.

The town rapidly outgrew Fraser's original plan. He had contemplated a city of 36,000 inhabitants, but by 1856 the population was already over 46,000 and in 1860 was over 60,000. The town had in consequence to be extended to some degree on the west, on the chessboard pattern; and its rapid development is shown by the street-names which were applied, some of which sufficiently indicate the period in which the streets were named. Thus we find the following roads to the west of the town, beyond Godwin Road, in the Lanmadaw Quarter where, however, while roads were built, nothing was done in the way of raising the level of the land:

Oliphant Street after Lt-Col. W. S. Oliphant, Chief Engineer of the Pub-Works Department in the later 1860's and the 1870's.

Stevenson Street after Major J. F. J. Stevenson, Commissioner of the Pegu Division 1862 to 68.

Phoongyee Street from the kyaungs of Lanmadaw.

Williams Street after Lieut. J. M. Williams, Executive Engineer in the 1860's; and later Chief Engineer.

Keighly Street after Captain H. P. Keighly, Executive Engineer in the 1850's; and

West Street which marked the limit of the town as envisaged at this period.

East Rangoon developed much more slowly. It was early proposed to lay out the Botataung and Pazundaung areas on the chess-board pattern, and a causeway six feet high and fifty feet broad, known as Monkey Point Road, was run across the swamps towards the Pazundaung Creek, while Montgomerie Street was also extended as far as the Creek, and a road, the Pazundaung Road, was as early as 1858 aligned behind the timber-yards along the bank of the Creek. Otherwise, however, no development was attempted in East Rangoon which, except for the mills and timber-yards verging the River and Creek, remained an area of swamps and paddy-fields[1]. In 1869 it was noted that "to the east of Sparks Street, there was no pucca building,"[2] and a map of 1871 confirms this statement. Dalhousie Street had, however, by 1871 been extended as far as the Pazundaung Creek; and one or two roads had been constructed in Theinbyu where, nevertheless, houses were yet few. Dalla likewise remained undeveloped except for the Government Dockyard. Kemmendine had been laid out, on the chess-board plan, in 1855, but elsewhere to the north of the town the country lay waste. There was about 1870

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[1] William's map of 1867 is misleading. It marks on the east of the town Creek Street and Botataung Street as well as a complete net-work of roads unnamed; but these streets and roads did not exist in fact, and were as yet merely projected.

[2] Agabeg, *Recollections and Reflections*, p. 270.

a project for making a road from the River at Kemmendine across country through approximately the present Windermere Park area to the Pazundaung Creek, but nothing came of what was, at that time, an entirely useless scheme. There was no demand for communications so far out of the town; even on the north of the Dalhousie Park there were in 1870 only three houses. These were Lake House, occupied by Edward Fowle, advocate, merchant, Consul for Siam, formerly a partner in a firm with the remarkable name of Currie, Fowle & Co.; West House, occupied by a partner in the firm of Gladstone Wylie & Co.; and Anchorage House, built by Mr. Hotson of Buchanan & Co. In Kokine there was not a single house until about 1874, when Mr. Alexander Watson of the Chartered Bank built a small bungalow there, though his action in living "so far out in a thick jungle" was viewed with astonishment by his friends. In Boundary and Windsor Roads, then known as Magistrate's Boundary Road and Cantonment Boundary Road, there was in 1870 scarcely a house;[1] and in Ahlone hardly any except those attached to the American Baptist Mission. Such houses as had been built could not have been very comfortable, for even in the Cantonments the houses consisted of "wooden shanties with thatched roofs",[2] and it was noted that "the greater part of the European private residences are raised upon piles. These are built of plain teak boards and have tiled roofs".[3]

Although Rangoon was as yet a very small city in comparison with Rangoon of today, it was by no means lacking in wealth. Commerce was expanding rapidly. Under Burmese rule the export of some profitable commodities, in particular rice, had been prohibited; under the new régime no such restriction remained, and before long rice replaced timber as the primary article of commerce. The price of unhusked rice in 1850-51 had been Rs. 15 per hundred baskets; in 1852-53 it had already risen to Rs. 35, and by 1855-56 was as much as Rs. 53. Figures of imports and exports for the early years are scarcely ascertainable, but it appears that in 1858-59 the imports by sea into Rangoon amounted to a value of Rs. 127,43, 744, and the sea-borne exports to Rs. 85,66,817, making a total overseas trade, foreign and coastal, of Rs. 213,10,561. A detailed statement showing the variety of goods which passed through the Custom House other than goods coming from or going to Bengal is available for the year 1855-56; and from this statement it appears that among imports textiles, principally cotton goods, held pride of place, contributing a value of Rs. 14,92,000 out of a total of Rs. 25,75,000, of which cotton amounted to Rs. 13,42,000. Liquors came second in value, with Rs. 2,58,000 and coal third with Rs. 2,30,000. All other imports were on a small scale. Among the exports, rice was easily preeminent, contributing Rs. 18,06,000 of the total of Rs. 20,09,000. Cutch came second, with Rs. 84,997, and timber third with Rs. 34,510. Of the rice,

[1] See Plate No. 24 — *Tiger Alley, 1855;* and Compare Plate No. 30 — *Tiger Alley, 1838.*

[2] Agabeg *op. cit.*, p. 284-5.

[3] Vincent: *Land of the White Elephant*, p. 5.

77 per cent went to Europe, mainly to the United Kingdom, and the rest to the Straits and China.[1] There is, however, no record of the amount of rice exported to Bengal.

The conclusion of the Commercial Treaty of 1862 with the Burmese King, and still more the conclusion of the Commercial Treaty of 1867, stimulated trade with Upper Burma which, prior to 1862, was almost at a standstill; and large amounts of goods began to pass through the Rangoon Custom House to and from the Burmese Kingdom. Thus by the year 1868-69 the total value of imports by sea to Rangoon had risen to Rs. 234,64,602, and the value of exports to Rs. 195,40,551, giving a total trade of Rs. 430,05,153.

One effect of the growth of Rangoon's commerce was to displace Moulmein from its position as the principal port of British Burma. In 1868-69 the imports into Moulmein valued only Rs. 44,94,000 as compared with Rs. 234,64,000 at Rangoon, and the exports only Rs. 82,59,000 as compared with Rs. 195,40,000. Thus Rangoon was already beginning to predominate in the sea-borne trade of Burma. It was noted that in general at the beginning of the eighth decade of the century Rangoon had an aspect of prosperity. "Everywhere throughout Rangoon abundance prevails. There is an air of plenty that cannot fail to strike the newly-arrived visitor. The people, male and female, look in good condition, clean, well clothed, well fed, and certainly happy in circumstances, if their faces speak true".[2]

If the handful of European merchants who had resided in Rangoon before the War of 1852 hoped to monopolise this growing trade, they were sadly disappointed; for the trade of Rangoon fell into other hands, at first largely into the hands of firms already established in Arakan or Tenasserim, and the former merchants of Rangoon were rapidly driven out of business by their new competitors. The foremost of the European trading concerns of the period was the house of Messrs. Todd Findlay & Co., formerly of Moulmein and Akyab, who had their office at the corner of Phayre Street and Strand Road. They dealt in rice and timber, and were importers. Further, the firm inaugurated the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company. A government flotilla and dockyard had been maintained in Rangoon since 1852, the flotilla being used for the transport of mails and, when necessary, of troops, through the Delta. In or about the year 1860, Mr. George J. Swann, formerly in the employ of Messrs. P. Henderson & Co., of Glasgow, came to Burma as an employee of Messrs. Todd Findlay. Having a knowledge of shipping, he perceived the uneconomical management of the dockyard and flotilla, and induced his firm to take the matter up with Government; with the result that in 1862 the flotilla and dockyard were made over to the firm, which became the government contractor for riverine mails and transport in return

[1] *Tabular Statement of the Commerce and Shipping of the ports of Rangoon and Bassein 1855—56.*

[2] Gordon, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

PLATE No. 20



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TRINITY CHURCH, 1869.

for a subsidy of £150 a month. Messrs. Todd Findlay, however, having had little experience of such work, were unable to make the contract pay; and in 1865 they made the contract over to Mr. Peter Denny, of the Dumbarton shipbuilding firm of Denny Bros., and to Messrs. Henderson & Co., and to Mr. James Galbraith of the latter firm. Messrs. Henderson had formerly been engaged in the carrying trade to America and, from about 1860, to New Zealand; but had developed a connection with Burma since vessels homeward bound from New Zealand occasionally put into Rangoon to complete their cargoes with rice, which now, with the lapse of the Burmese law, could be exported. A regular service, of sailing vessels, between the United Kingdom and Rangoon was before long established, the first ship for the Rangoon trade being built by Messrs. Denny in 1863. Messrs. Henderson's interests in Burma were now increased by their participation in the riverine trade. The new contractors took over the flotilla enterprise for £20,000, and the flotilla was then linked with Messrs. Henderson's shipping as the Irrawaddy Flotilla and Burmese Steam Navigation Company, with Mr. T. D. Findlay as Chairman and Mr. Galbraith as Managing Director. In 1872 the riverine and sea-going sections were separated and the latter became the British and Burmese Steam Navigation Company, with Messrs. Henderson as Managing Agents, while the former became the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company. The firm of Todd Findlay broke up at about the same time into Messrs. T. D. Findlay at Moulmein and Messrs. Todd Findlay at Rangoon.

The other principal English firms were Messrs. Gladstone Wylie; Messrs. J. and G. Bulloch, which appears to have transferred itself to Rangoon from Akyab; and Messrs. Gillanders, Ogilvy and Co. of Calcutta (now Messrs. Gillanders, Arbuthnot & Co.). The last-named had established a branch in Rangoon at least as early as 1854, dealing in timber and piece-goods. But in the 1850's the trade of Rangoon was yet in embryo and the branch was closed down, probably in 1859, and an agency in the person of F. Burot replaced it. In 1868, however, the firm re-opened its branch which has been maintained ever since, and after occupying for a couple of years an office in Fytche Square, purchased for Rs. 37,000 a site on the Strand. The re-opening of the Rangoon Branch was evidently inspired by the Commercial Treaty of 1867. Another English firm which appears in the 1860's, if not earlier, is the establishment of Messrs. W. Q. Rowett & Co., which also exported timber and imported piece-goods and other foreign commodities. The opening of commercial relations with Upper Burma was also responsible for the formation of the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation; in 1863 William Wallace, who had earlier dealt in timber at Moulmein, secured from King Mindon a license to extract timber from the forests near Pyinmana, and in the following year the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation was floated to provide the necessary capital. The actual work of extraction was placed in the hands of Messrs. Darwood & Goldenberg, this firm having its

origin in the timber business founded in Moulmein by an officer named Darwood who took part in the attack on Martaban in 1824 and who, having lost a leg by wounds, retired and settled in Tenasserim. There was also the firm of Galbraith Dalziel & Co., which developed into Messrs. Finlay Fleming & Co., when Mr. Kirkman Finlay, an assistant in the firm, and Mr. Tarbett Fleming, took over the business on the death of Dalziel and the retirement of Galbraith about 1875. The firm of Steel Brothers found its origin in William Strang Steel, who first came to Rangoon in 1862 as an assistant of Messrs. Gladstone Wylie; when a well-known Indian merchant, Nanabhoy Burjorjee, died in 1870, Steel, in conjunction with his brother James Alison Steel, formed the firm of W. Steel & Co., the London house of which was known as Steel Brothers; and took over Nanabhoy's rice mill and timber yard, and also his offices which lay at the corner of Merchant Street and Maung Tawlay Street.

Rangoon continued to be cosmopolitan in its commercial life, and there were a number of German commercial establishments in the town, such as those of Mohr Brothers, established in Akyab in 1837 and in Rangoon in 1859; Niebuhr & Co.; Diekmann Barkhausen & Co., which became the Ellerman Rice Mills Ltd, in 1915; Gerber Christien & Co.; Stohmann & Co.; Kruger & Co., which in 1907 became the Burma Rice & Trading Co.; all these had appeared by about 1870. Indeed, in 1867 the German community was sufficiently numerous to form a German Club, on a site in Commissioner Road: its later building, erected in 1890, is now utilised by the Convent. About 1868 the important Dutch firm of Hegt & Wijtenhorst was founded by William Noordhock Hegt and an old sea-captain named Wijtenhorst who had long traded to Rangoon. This house, which had its offices on a site where the Strand Hotel now is, dealt originally as retailers in wines, provisions, and ship's stores, but later, perhaps when Wijtenhorst died soon after the foundation of the business, confined itself to wholesale affairs, and transferred the retail trade to Messrs. Cotton Hertz & Co. Hegt & Co., as the firm came to be called, was transformed into a limited liability company in 1897 as The Trading Company, and it is by that name that it is now known.[1] Another Dutch firm, which, however, unlike The Trading Company, has not survived, was that of Dinckgreve, Mack & Co., founded probably in the 1870's; this establishment, known from 1898 onwards as Stork & Co., ceased to exist in 1921.

There were also French commercial connections in Rangoon, such as the company of M. Frassinet of Marseilles, which was in 1870 sold to Messrs. Gillanders and became the Burma Company. The subsequent history of this undertaking is of some interest as exemplifying the conditions under which commerce was carried on in those days. The manager of the French Company had been Mr. Leon Hernandez, and he continued in employment after

[1] See Plate No. 25 — *Hegt and Co's Premises, 1868;* and compare Plate No. 35 — *The Trading Company's premises, 1938.*

the transfer of the company. Among the assets were certain grants of forestry rights made by the Government of the province, and the practice then was, as now, that a forestry officer marked with a hammer those teak trees that might be cut down, while the actual felling was done by Burmese labour paid by the firm, which made advance payments to its employees and adjusted the accounts of the foresters after the logs had been floated down the Pegu River to the Government Timber Depot and the necessary royalty had been paid. When the new Company sent its foresters to commence felling, it was found that the forestry officer, by name Graham, had neglected to mark any trees; and the foresters went to Graham, and bribed him with, it is said, the sum of £2,000, to lend them his official hammer, with which they proceeded to mark as many trees as they wanted. But unfortunately many of the trees which were thus unlawfully hammer-marked were not fit for felling, and when they were placed in the water they sank. The foresters therefore lighted fires under the immature logs to dry them out; but when this timber reached the Forest Depot the situation was at once perceived. All the Company's logs, good or bad, were then confiscated; and the Company not only lost its timber, but was also fined the amount of the royalty, and in addition was unable to recover its advances from the employees. An order for Graham's arrest was issued, but he fled the country. The result of this unfortunate incident was that the Burma Company went into liquidation. The reason for the severity with which Government treated the Company was that its manager, Hernandez, was strongly suspected of complicity in the crime, and colour was lent to the suspicion by his suicide soon afterwards. Messrs. Gillanders had another equally disastrous subsidiary, the Burma Agricultural Company, which was formed in 1873 to cultivate jute on land which had been granted to the Burma Company; but unexpected floods ruined this enterprise also, and after losing some four lakhs the Agricultural Company had to go into liquidation also.

During its short career the Burma Company had engaged in other work as well, such as ship-building, and had built four stern-wheel steamers for King Mindon; and had prepared, through Hernandez, a scheme for a model farm which the King had some idea of establishing; but the scheme was never put into operation.

The principal retail firms were Edmund Jones & Co., who were also auctioneers; Messrs A. Scott & Co., established as early as 1855; and Messrs. Rowe & Co., founded by Mr. R. V. Rowe in 1867 in small premises in Mogul Street and moved soon after to the corner of Merchant Street and Maung Tawlay Street on the north side opposite Messrs. Steel's office.[1] The retail trade must have been somewhat precarious, for arrivals of ships were uncertain; but there was a great demand for some commodities, such as quinine which at one time sold at Rs. 12 per ounce; medicines in general, the prices

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[1] See Plate No. 26 — *Premises of Rowe & Co.*, 1883.

of which were "at the least sixteen hundred per cent, beyond what the article would have cost in England;"[1] candles, mainly of French manufacture; besides liquors of which brandy was the favourite, the drinking of brandy being justified by the conscience-stricken on the ground that it was beneficial to health.[2] Soda-water had to be imported; and ice was a highly valuable commodity which was occasionally obtainable from American vessels; not until the Hon. Ashley Eden became Chief Commissioner in 1872 was ice manufactured locally, for Eden, finding life without ice intolerable, induced a Frenchman named Jarry to set up an ice-factory in Sule Pagoda Road where Messrs. DuBern's ice and mineral-water factory was later opened in 1892. Beer, however, was being manufactured in Rangoon by about 1870. The principal importer of liquor seems to have been Messrs. Solomon & Co., this firm having been established in 1871. Another important retail business which came into existence at an early date was the Armenian House of Messrs. Balthazar, which was founded in 1856 by Mr. Balthazar H. Balthazar on a small scale, selling imported goods in the market or by public auction.

The principal Muslim merchants were Aga Ahmed Ispahanee, Mahomed Ebrahimjee Doopley, Moolla Dawood and Jamal Brothers, who appear in the 1860's if not earlier. The principal Hindu merchant was Bugwan Dass, later Rai Bahadur.

Some attempt to organise commercial opinion was evidently made at an early date, for a Chamber of Commerce appears in 1863; but no trace of its existence can be found after 1869.

Banking naturally developed with the growth of the port. The Bank of Bengal, now the Imperial Bank of India, was established in 1861 in a building in Phayre Street, and removed to its present site about 1870. The Chartered Bank opened as early as 1858, also in Phayre Street, but soon moved to a site on the Strand approximately where the Port Trust office now stands.

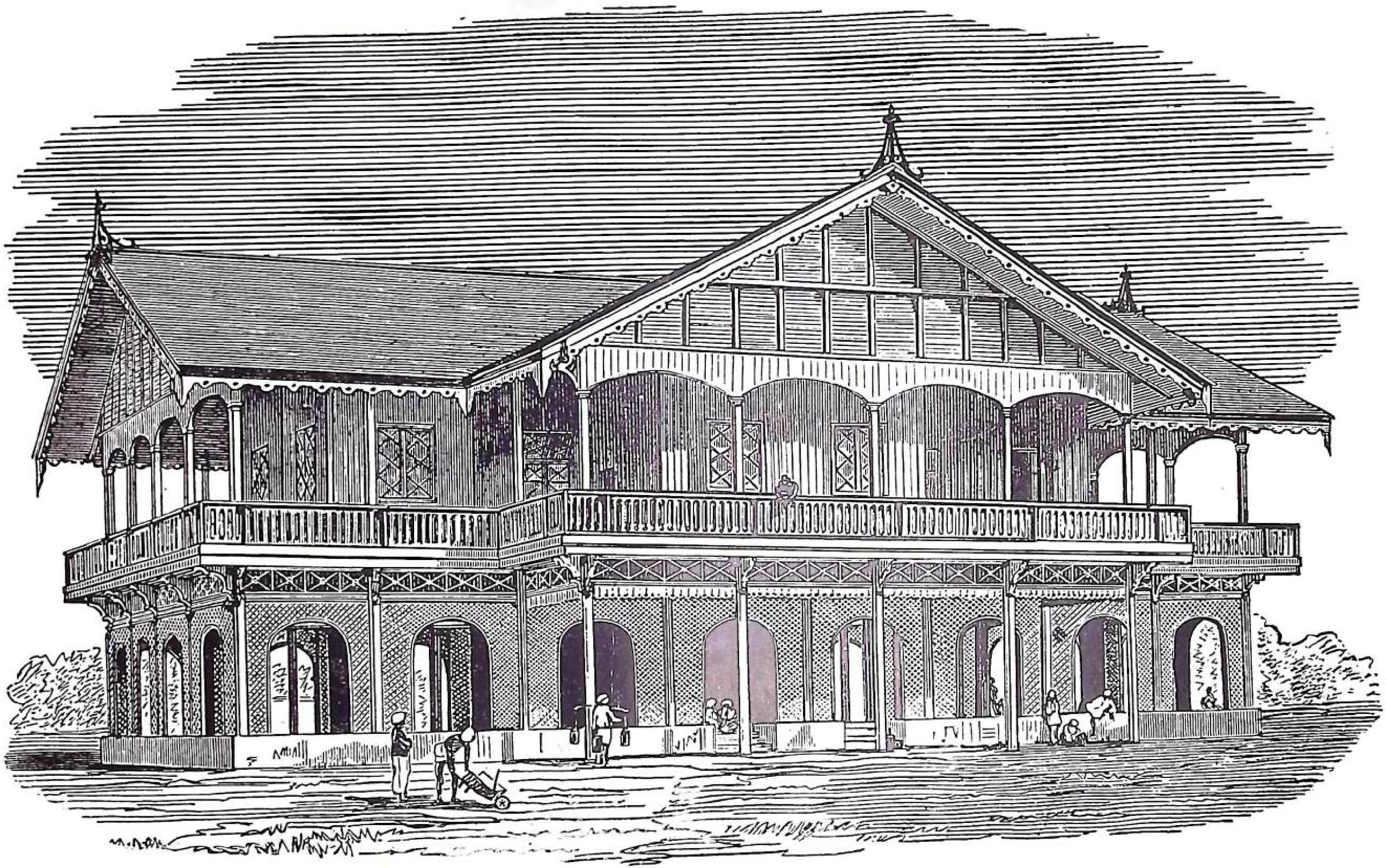
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[1] Gordon, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

[2] The variation in the proportions of the different types of liquor imported at various periods sheds light on the change of drinking-habits which has taken place:—

	1855–56		1900–01		1920–21
Beer	61%		47%		41%
Wines	22%		7%		10%
Spirits	17%		40%		48%
		Cider	5%		0.01%
Among the spirits the proportions were—					
Brandy	37%	Brandy	54%	Whiskey	55%
Gin	33%	Whiskey	36%	Brandy	35%
Arrack	19%	Gin	5.6%	Gin	4.2%
Liqueurs	10%	Rum	2.9%	Rum	3.7%
Whiskey	0.7%	Liqueurs	1.4%	Liqueurs	2.5%
Rum	0.4%				
Among the wines the proportions were—					
Sherry, Madeira, etc.	46%	Port	30%	Champagne	37%
Champagne	23%	Champagne	29.5%	Port	23%
Claret	7.4%	Claret	9.7%	Sherry, etc.	4.8%
Port	3.3%	Sherry, etc.	5.7%	Other wine	35%
Other wine	20%	Other wine	25%		

PLATE No. 21



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PHAYRE MUSEUM, RANGOON, 1872

Shipping was to a considerable extent in the hands of Messrs. P. Henderson and of the British India Steam Navigation Co. It early became apparent that there was need for a regular line of steamships plying between Rangoon and Calcutta, and in 1854 the East India Company called for tenders for a mail contract, which was secured by Messrs. Mackinnon Mackenzie & Co. of Calcutta, who placed two small steamers, the *Baltic* and the *Cape of Good Hope*, on the run. By 1856 the Calcutta and Burmah Steam Navigation Co. had been formed to work the contract; and a ship of 900 tons, the *Burmah*, was brought into service by this Company in 1858. Four years later a general system of steamship communication around the Indian Ocean was established with the aid of a government mail contract, and fortnightly services were instituted between Calcutta and Akyab, Rangoon, and Moulmein, and monthly sailings between Rangoon and Madras and from Calcutta via Rangoon to Singapore. In 1863 the name of the company was changed to the British India Steam Navigation Co.

The amount of shipping that passed through the port increased with remarkable rapidity. In the year 1855-56 there entered 149 steamships and square-rigged vessels, of total tonnage 65,737 tons and 16 local craft of total tonnage 1,576 tons. In 1861-62, there entered 438 vessels of total tonnage 157,472 tons. In 1867-68 the number of vessels had increased to 519 and the tonnage to 246,854 tons. In 1870-71 the number of vessels was 689 of 313,998 tons. The administration of this rapidly growing port seems, however, to have been primitive. The Master Attendant was responsible for the harbour, and had control of shipping, while the shore was under the administration of the Town Magistrate. The Magistrate was often lax in his supervision; thus in 1861 the Commissioner pointed out that some eighteen months earlier permission had been given for a cargo of coconuts to be landed on the Strand opposite China Street on the understanding that it would be removed within two months; but that after eighteen months the spot had become a regular coconut depot. Orders had to be given for the removal of the nuts; and at the same time measures had to be taken for the prohibition of the deposit of "articles which create dirt and nuisance" on the bank between Godwin Road and East Street. The Commissioner's instruction that "The riverbank should be examined *daily* at low tide in order that all carcases, etc., should be removed" suggests that this elementary precaution had been neglected.[1] Little progress, moreover, had been made in port works. All revenues derived from river-bank fees, wharf-godown rents, etc., were appropriated for the Town Lands Fund, and there was thus a lack of money for port development. In the year 1860-61 the receipts of the Port Fund were only about Rs. 60,000, of which three-quarters was expended on establishment, stores, and repairs to the light-vessel. In consequence few works could be undertaken. A wooden wharf built in 1859 was burnt down in 1867; but an iron wharf was completed opposite the end of Phayre Street in the same year.

[1] *Selections from Papers;* Memorandum by Commissioner of Pegu, dated 19th July, 1861.

In 1871 a wharf was built at Latter Street, but as it was placed parallel to the Strand Road instead of to the stream it had little utility. In 1874 the Sule Pagoda Road Wharf was completed; but the construction of this was attended with an unfortunate incident when, during the erection of a quay wall in the year 1871, "unfortunately an entire subsidence of the river bank led to the slipping forward of the wall into the river."[1] The Viceroy, Lord Mayo, was in Rangoon at the time, but he was pleased to say that in his view no one was really to blame, although a loss of nearly ten thousand pounds was involved. Again, the pilot system had not worked well. The *Annual Administration Reports on British Burma* make frequent reference to accidents to shipping "mainly due to the recklessness and carelessness of certain of the European pilots."[2] So far there had been no pilot service: pilotage had been left to private enterprise, though the pilots, some of whom were Europeans and some Asiatic, were required to hold a license from the Chief Commissioner. Thus there developed two rival bands of pilots, each having its own pilot-brig off the River mouth, although they were allowed accommodation on the light-ship if they desired, and each group boycotting shipmasters who employed members of the rival gang; they even indulged in violence towards one another at times. The two groups later amalgamated into the Pilot Club, and this Club appears to have fixed the rate of pilotage by agreement with the owners and commanders of vessels. The signalling station was at the Sale Barracks, where the pagoda formerly known as Sale's Pagoda was used for the purpose and thus acquired the name of Signal Pagoda.[3]

The administration of the town was as primitive as the administration of the port. Although Rangoon was so rapidly growing in commercial importance, yet for many years after the establishment of British rule the administration of the city remained purely bureaucratic in character. It is true that under an order dated the 9th May 1865 "Means shall be taken as far as possible to ascertain the wishes of the ratepayers in the disposal of the funds"[2] derived from municipal taxation, but it is difficult to see how this could be done without some system of representation, and not for thirty years was any system of election introduced into the administration, while for the first twenty years the control of municipal affairs rested entirely with the Town Magistrate.

The area under the Town Magistrate's control was that defined in the year 1853, excluding the Cantonment lands. The Cantonment, consisting of the land held by the military authorities, occupied an area of over two square miles. Its limits were on the north the Cantonment Boundary Road (now Windsor Road and Boundary Road) from the Government House compound to Tiger Alley: then a line drawn south-east from that point to the junction

[1] *Annual Report on the Administration of British Burma*, 1871-72.
[2] *ibid.* 1872-73.
[3] See Plate No. 28 — *The Signal Pagoda* at Rangoon, 1875.
[4] Fryer: *Handbook for British Burma*, (1867).

of Park Road and Churchill Road; on the east, the modern Bahan Road, from the southern end of which the boundary ran around the Cantonment Cemetery, and southwards till it met Cemetery Road (now Victoria Avenue), whence the boundary encircled the Kandawgale area, and ran south along Signal Pagoda Road to Lancaster Road. On the south the boundary lay along Lancaster Road and the old Cantonment Boundary Road which has now been replaced by the Railway, and so westwards to Leeds Road, and northward along Leeds Road and the Government House fence to the Cantonment Boundary Road. Within this wide area civil administration was in the hands of a committee comprising the Officer Commanding the Cantonment, the Sanitary Officer of the Cantonment, the Cantonment Executive Engineer, and the Cantonment Magistrate. This body formed in effect a municipal committee, and the Municipal Authority of the Rangoon City had no jurisdiction within the Cantonment limits. The Officer Commanding had the power of veto over the decisions of the committee.

Included within the Cantonment was the Shwe Dagon Pagoda, the precincts of which had from the first been partially utilised for military purposes. It had been intended to fortify the platform, since it contained the arsenal and was also the centre of defence in case of civil disturbance, but it was some years before any attempts were made to carry out this plan. Not till 1867 was this work begun; but by 1876 "the great pagoda and arsenal of Rangoon have been completely surrounded by a ditch and escarp wall, and further safety has been ensured by shutting off all communication between the pagoda and the arsenal, the latter being now completely entrenched". At the same time the defences at Monkey Point were put in order[1]. The Cantonments provided a useful amenity for the town in the Cantonment Gardens, which had been originally planned in 1854-56 by Mr. Scott, of the Calcutta Botanic Gardens, though the actual laying-out appears to have been effected partly by Colonel Oliphant of the Public Works Department and partly by Major G. Harris of the Commissariat.

It was to the Rangoon Cantonment that the last Mogul Emperor, Abu Zafar Bahadur Shah, was sent after the Indian Mutiny, and there he died in 1862 and was buried in a compound on the south side of Theatre Road[2].

Outside the Cantonment area, the Town Magistrate exercised the powers of municipal administration. Much of the wide area nominally within the municipal limits remained, however, waste land for many years and most of the population lived in the town proper between West Street and East Street: outside was still jungle and paddy-land. The Town Magistrate within the limits of the Municipality was responsible for many duties. He had control of the police force, which was paid out of municipal revenues. He was in

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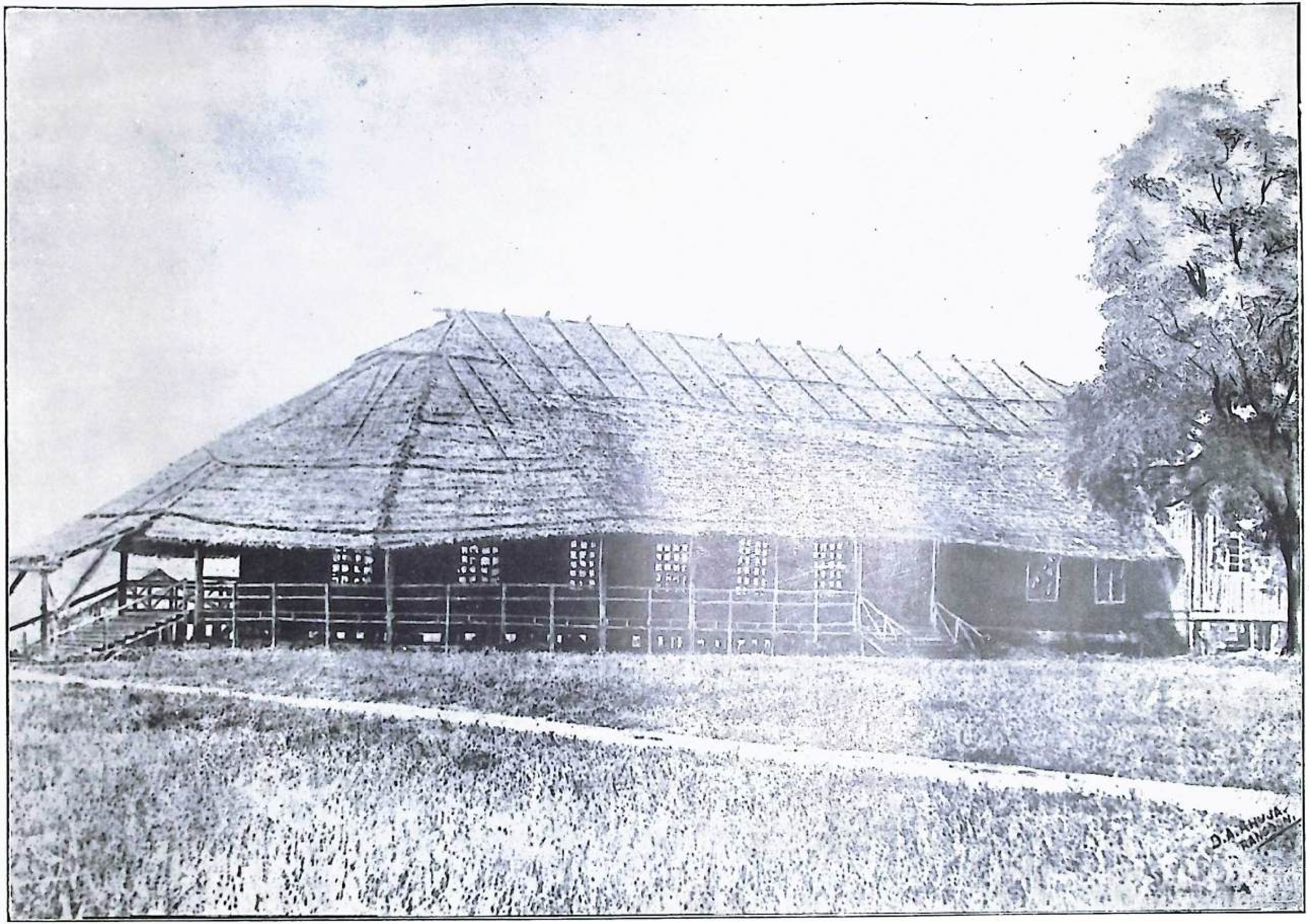
[1] Fytche, *op. cit.*, II. p. 339; *Annual Reports on the Administration of British Burma.*

[2] Since renamed *Zafar Shah Road.*

charge of the allotment of town and suburban building-sites and of the collection of municipal and provincial taxes. He was responsible for the enforcement of various municipal regulations and for the municipal finances. In matters of finance, the sums collected by him from the proceeds of land sales had amounted, by the end of the financial year 1859-60, to over twelve lakhs of rupees, and large sums were also being collected by way of rent, for the rents received from short-term leaseholders and from squatters amounted in the same period to over two lakhs of rupees. The duty of enforcing municipal regulations was also onerous. Certain sections of Act XIII of 1856 were applied to the town, and in 1862 certains sections of Act XIV of the same year were also applied. These sections prohibited obstruction of roads, bathing in public reservoirs, depositing rubbish or refuse in public places, allowing waste water to run into the streets or surface drains, washing clothes or animals in streams or tanks otherwise than as permitted by the Magistrate, and many more such offences. For the enforcement of these regulations the Magistrate was responsible; and he was also required to ensure that slaughter-houses and markets were properly paved and drained. He could call upon occupants of buildings to improve their drains. Any occupier whose building or land was "filthy and unwholesome" or "overgrown with rank and noisesome vegetation" was liable to be fined by him. He might have the names of roads painted in conspicuous places and could impose a fine on anyone altering or defacing such notices or putting up another name. He was responsible for suppressing gambling-dens. He had wide powers of inspection of buildings. Under Act XLVIII of 1860 he might impose fines for "furious or negligent driving or riding", and for the use of indecent language in public. The discharge of firearms in public places was also prohibited. Since in addition to the performance of these multifarious municipal functions he was also burdened with judicial and general administrative duties, the Town Magistrate was a sorely overworked official. He was not, however, concerned directly with public works, which were in the hands of the Executive Engineer of the Town Division, Public Works Department, subject to the control of the Chief Engineer for the province.

It is not surprising that under such conditions the municipal administration did not progress. Police arrangements, for example, were inadequate. The habitual possession of arms by the indigenous population in the early years was an incentive to crimes of violence, and it was recorded that "for several years after the annexation the more serious crimes such as murder, gang-robbery, technically called dacoity, were far from uncommon"; and it was noted that "the numerous bad characters to be found in the Kyee-myeng-daing and Poo-zwon-doung quarters of Rangoon lend their aid in swelling the number (of dacoities) especially in the immediate neighbourhood of Rangoon."[1] An attempt was made to remedy the situation in 1858 by taking the very necessary step of disarming the population of the town, but the

[1] *British Burma Gazetteer* II. p. 564-5.



By permission of Max L. Friedlander, Esq.

THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS

immediate effect was that as the lawful gave up their arms and the unlawful concealed them, there was for a time an increase of crime.[1] The police force was therefore strengthened by the employment of European Inspectors, the force having been so far almost exclusively Indian, it being considered that an Indian force could most efficiently deal with the cosmopolitan population of the port. But the force was underpaid; the wages of a cooly amounted to as much as Rs. 12 or even Rs. 15 a month, whereas a constable received only Rs. 9 to Rs. 11. "The consequence was", it was stated, "that the police was a kind of refuge for the destitute, and those who were too weak or idle for coolie work, or who, it is feared, maintained a secret understanding with thieves and dacoits, and added the wages of corruption to their small salaries."[2] In 1869 their pay was raised, but even so dismissals for misconduct continued numerous, amounting in one year, 1870-71, to as much as 38 per cent of the force.

One particularly urgent problem which the Magistrate had to face was that of sanitation. The original scheme for a sewage system had been abandoned, and for some years after 1852 nothing at all was done either in the matter of disposal of sewage or in the matter of the removal of house-refuse. The failure to provide for services which are so highly essential in a tropical country early led to criticism in the public press: "We beg to draw the serious attention of the Police Magistrate", wrote the *Rangoon Chronicle*, "to various parts of the town where decaying wrecks of mortality, dead dogs in an advanced stage of decomposition, putrid carcases of cats and rats, rank vegetation, etc., so surround the place as to be killing."[3] And it was officially admitted that conditions were thoroughly bad: "of the present unhealthiness", wrote the Chief Commissioner in 1861, "there cannot be doubt, and the causes are probably such as are avoidable by cleanliness and proper drainage ..... The existing filth (is) very bad indeed."[4] But the state of the municipal funds made a regular sewage system impossible, and the only official attempt to deal with the problem took the form of an order, applied to every part of the Rangoon district, that trees and bushes in the vicinity of towns should not be cut down.[5] It was possible, however, to attempt something in the way of the removal of house refuse, and in 1861 a conservancy department was set up at a cost of Rs. 420 a month. To assist in this work, the services of fifty convicts were placed at the disposal of the Town Magistrate. In July 1865 the organization was further developed and the town was divided into two parts, east and west of Mogul Street, with a conservancy officer in charge of each section. The duty of the conservancy officer was to inspect bazaars and slaughter-houses, as well as to supervise the removal of rubbish, which occupants of houses placed by the roadside at such

[1] *Report on the Administration of Pegu* 1858-59.
[2] Fytche, *Burma Past and Present*, II. p. 327.
[3] Quoted Cuttriss: *Early Newspapers in Burma.*
[4] *Selections from Papers;* Memorandum by Commissioner of Pegu, dated 19th July, 1861.
[5] Furnivall, *Syriam Gazetteer* p. 171.

hours as the Magistrate specified; this refuse was carted to the River. The state of the town may be judged from the order issued to the conservancy department that "the carcases of dead dogs, bullocks, etc., found about the streets or floating about the harbour, shall be at once disposed of, either by sinking or burying them."[1] In other matters of hygiene also Rangoon was still backward. Thus the number of pariah dogs remained excessive. "Dogs swarm everywhere; they belong to no one; they prowl about in all directions; lean, hungry, and cowardly in appearance, their very look is repulsive"; and as a natural consequence hydrophobia was by no means infrequent, while there was in those days no remedy for this dread disease. "An unfortunate soldier of the 45th Regiment is seized with hydrophobia, one of the most frightful diseases that afflict humanity. Two months ago the poor fellow was bitten in the finger by a dog that rushed suddenly up to him while he was on sentry—some other men being bitten by the same animal on the same occasion. The wound has never healed; now that the disease has shown itself, the injured member is amputated, but he gives up all hope of recovery, as indeed he well may. His companions who like himself were bitten are naturally in great alarm for themselves. Many similar occurrences are said to take place."[2]

The root difficulty in dealing with sanitation and other such problems was lack of money. The only source of revenue of any magnitude which could be properly used for town purposes was the municipal tax. In the year 1860-61 this tax produced somewhat over Rs. 37,000. But the cost of police alone was Rs. 35,000. Yet expenditure on maintenance of public works and conservancy was essential, and in the same year there was in consequence a deficit of Rs. 85,000, which increased in the succeeding year to Rs. 90,000; so that in effect the cost of conservancy and public works was being borne by the public Treasury, to which the municipal fund was in debt, municipal revenue and expenditure being kept in and disbursed by the Treasury office. The Commissioner therefore proposed to the Government of India that legislation should be enacted providing for an increased rate of municipal taxation. This proposal caused alarm among the inhabitants of the town, who submitted a petition in which they sought a readjustment of revenues as between the municipal fund and the provincial funds. One suggested readjustment was the transfer to the municipality of the proceeds of land sales which had so far been credited to provincial revenues, in return for which Government had borne the cost of town development such as constructing roads and bridges, clearing jungle, and filling in tanks. It was pointed out that taxation in Rangoon was already heavy; in the year 1860-61 Rangoon with a population of 55,684, paid a total of over two lakhs and twenty thousand rupees in taxation, consisting mainly of Rs. 63,323 land rent, Rs. 37,639 municipal tax, Rs. 43,008 land-assessment in lieu of capitation-tax, and Rs. 77,277 income-tax, making an average of over Rs. 4 per head.

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[1] Fryer, *op. cit.*, p. 394.

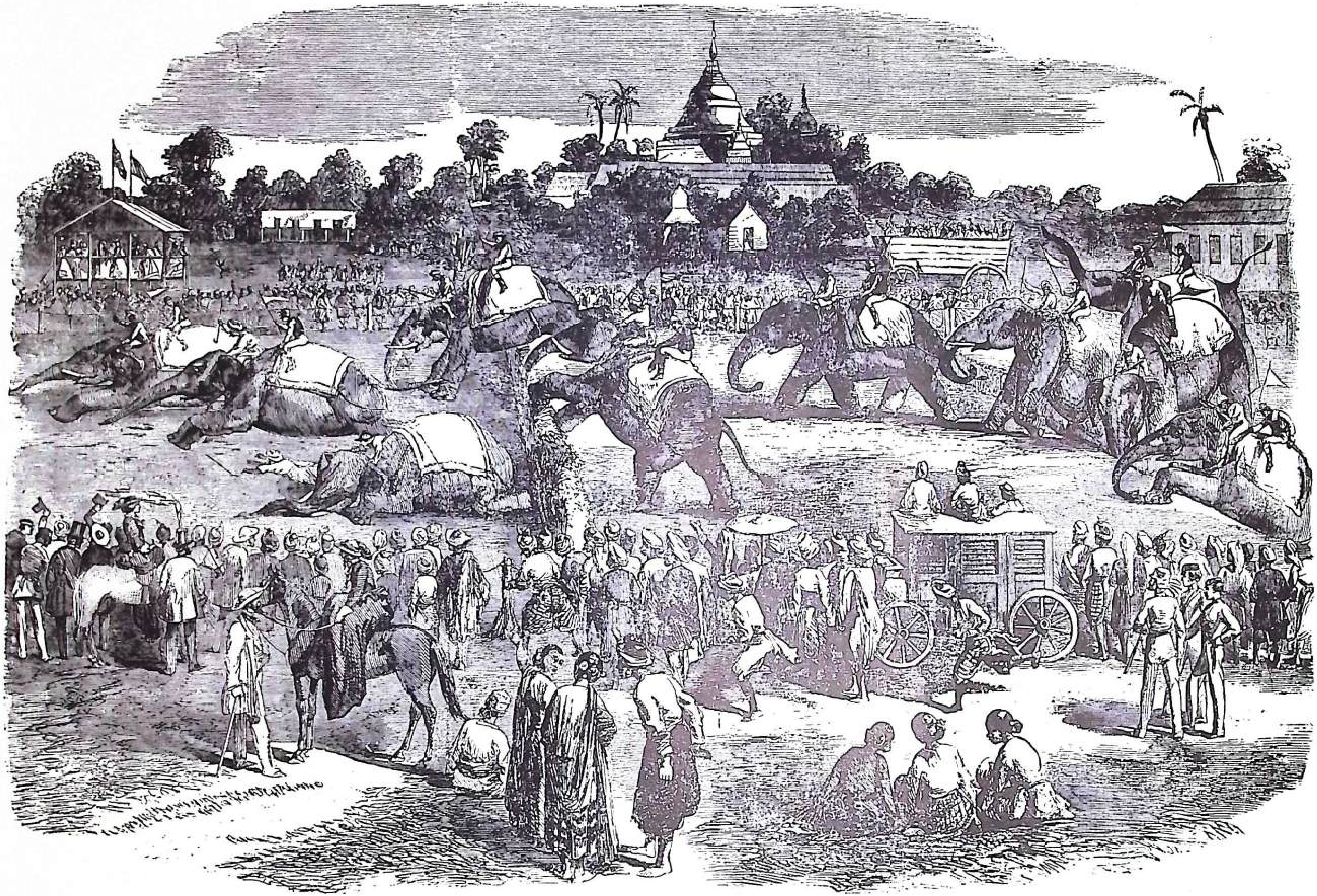
[2] Gordon, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-3.

It was complained, moreover, that when the land-assessment in lieu of capitation-tax was introduced in 1853, it was not anticipated that an income-tax would be levied also. The proposal was therefore made by the petitioners that certain heads of revenue such as proceeds from licenses for the wholesale or retail sale of liquor, fines for breaches of municipal regulations, and a quarter of the income-tax, should be transferred to the municipal fund. More than that, there was a demand for a thorough reform of the system of administration, and it was suggested that a partially elective Municipal Committee should be formed, thirteen candidates to be elected, one by each of thirteen quarters of the town, from among whom the Commissioner should select five; these five, together with the Town Magistrate and the Executive Engineer *ex officio* should take charge of municipal affairs. The Government of India declined to transfer any part of the income-tax or the proceeds of land sales, but it agreed to the transfer of certain minor sources of revenue. Thus from 1864 onwards the municipal fund received fees for hack-cart licenses, for licenses of ferries and passenger boats, liquor licenses, fines, and rents from the bazaar on the Government wharf; and, also, on the suggestion of the Commissioner, any surplus of income over expenditure in the land sales and rent fund was to be used for repairs to public works. These reforms provided the municipal fund with a total income of about Rs. 60,000 which produced solvency.

Nothing was done in regard to the suggested reform of administration, and when two years later a proposal was again advanced, this time by Government, for the establishment of elective committees in Rangoon, Moulmein, and Akyab, no public support was evoked. The only interest of the inhabitants of Rangoon was to avoid increased taxation, and once the projected increase in the municipal tax had been foregone, the proposal for an elective Municipal Committee lost its attractiveness.

Nevertheless, the Town Magistrate's administration was not satisfactory, and in the *Annual Administration Report* for the year 1869-70 the Chief Commissioner of the Province remarked that "the want of an Act to provide for the conservancy, improvement, and watching of towns in the Province, and for the levying of rates and taxes therein, was strongly felt." Rangoon had outgrown the somewhat primitive mode of administration so far in use; the sanitary and water-supply problems were becoming acute, and a larger interest and a greater degree of public support were needed. The same problems had arisen elsewhere in the province, and in 1871, therefore, a draft Municipal Bill was submitted to the Legislative Council of India and was ultimately passed as Act VII of 1874, the object being, according to the *Annual Administration Report* for 1873-74, to enable Government to call to its assistance in municipal matters the services of non-official residents. Under the terms of this Act, a Municipal Committee was established in Rangoon, and similar Committees were established also at Akyab, Moulmein, Bassein, Henzada, Prome and Toungoo.

Politically Rangoon was quiet during these years. After the abortive émeute of November 1853 there were no further alarms until the year 1870. In 1869 the Shwe Dagon Pagoda was regilt, and a proposal was received from King Mindon that advantage should be taken of this occasion to remove the ornaments of the Hti which should be sent to him at Mandalay for renewal; and this was done. In 1870 a new Hti was ready for despatch to Rangoon. This news, that the Burmese King was about to embellish the Shwe Dagon as his predecessors had done, aroused much excitement. The embellishment of the Pagoda had been an act by which the Kings had declared their supremacy over the Delta; and the provincial government, which had not realised the implication before, now perceived that though the erection of the Hti was certainly of a religious significance, it might also be regarded as having a political complexion and as a recognition of the claims of the King to sovereignty over Lower Burma. This thought was present in the minds of many of the inhabitants of British Burma, and the excitement so aroused, together with the fears of many that "dacoits and other troublesome characters" might take advantage of the vast gathering of people who would come to Rangoon to see the erection, was such as to lead government to induce the King to postpone the ceremony of erection for twelve months, by which time the true situation might have become understood and proper precautions taken against any disturbance. The Chief Commissioner, in addition, persuaded the King to allow the actual elevation of the Hti to be carried out not by the royal officers but by the people of British Burma. A Committee of five influential Burmans of Rangoon was appointed by the Chief Commissioner to manage the affair, and attached to the committee was Maung On, the senior Extra Assistant Commissioner, who was son-in-law of Sitke U Tawlay, and had much local influence. The Hti was brought from Mandalay by steamer under the care of the Popa Wundauk, and reached Rangoon on the 22nd October 1871. On the 24th it was landed and placed in a building specially erected for the purpose on the river bank; and on the 26th the Popa Wundauk was officially received by the Chief Commissioner, the Hon. Ashley Eden, at the Secretariat, and the Hti was formally made over to him for erection by the people of British Burma. The Chief Commissioner then made the Hti over to Maung On and the committee of elders, and on the 28th it was conveyed with much ceremony to a building prepared for it on the Pagoda platform. Elaborate measures were necessary for removing the old Hti and elevating the new one. A scaffolding of bamboos and "a most intricate machinery of ropes and pulleys was constructed. Briefly described, the operation was thus carried out. A roadway of six strong ropes was made from a point on the platform, about four hundred feet from the centre of the Pagoda, to a point on the face of the Pagoda, about two hundred feet from its base. On this rope roadway ran a carriage, whereon was placed the portion of the Htee to be raised. The pulling rope stretched up to an equal height with the roadway, and passing over the shoulder of the Pagoda went



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ELEPHANT STEEPLECHASE AT RANGOON, 1858.

down to the other side, where traction was made as occasion required by thousands of people only too anxious to share in the merit of having a hand in so holy a work. From the point where the rope roadway reached the face of the Pagoda, a further elevation was made of ropes working on a pulley and crane erected on a platform which had been constructed on the highest point of the scaffolding". Thus the old Hti was taken down, and the new Hti was raised in sections, the work taking from the 21st to the 26th November to complete. On the 27th the Popa Wundauk returned to Mandalay.

The labour involved in this operation was considerable. 50,000 bamboos and seventy boat-loads of canes were used in making the scaffolding, besides hundreds of wooden poles. For the first month about 300 workmen were continually employed, and for the last month quite 500. The skilled workmen of Rangoon aided in the task.

The Hti so erected is of great value. It consists of wrought iron, with seven tiers, the lowest of which is 13½ feet in diameter and weighs a ton and a third. Above the tiers is a spire on which is a vane. The gold given by the King for plating the iron was valued at Rupees 2,36,187; the rubies, emeralds, diamonds, pearls, and other precious stones used to adorn the Hti valued Rupees 53,066; these were given by the King. The people of Rangoon gave gold valued Rupees 31,337 and precious stones for the vane worth Rupees 15,079; smaller offerings of jewels and rings, etc., of Rupees 15,517; and new bells of gold and silver valued at Rupees 1,09,641. If the value of the portions of the old Hti which were used in making the new one, and the old gold taken off it and re-used, be added, another Rupees 38,446 must be added to the cost; while the bells of the old Hti used again were valued at Rupees 1,23,644; giving a total value of Rupees 6,22,917.

In addition, much expenditure was involved in the usual hospitality extended on such occasions to visitors.

The number of people attracted to the town by this event was enormous. On the day when the Hti was conveyed to the Pagoda platform it was estimated that there were 50,000 people in the streets, and the crowd was so great that it took several hours for the journey from the waterside to be completed. On one day it was considered that 100,000 people were present on and around the Pagoda platform. Despite the large number of visitors to the town, and despite the fears of a political complexion being attached to the episode, there was no disturbance of the peace. Indeed, it was found that there was less than the usual amount of crime. It may be noted, however, that special precautions were taken. The police force was increased by one hundred men; and guards of troops were placed around the important buildings of the town and at strategic points. The arrangements, made by the Inspector-General of Police, Major H. T. Duncan, met with the high approval

of the Chief Commissioner, who also commented on the valuable services of Mr. Edwards, the retired Collector of Customs, who used his experience and influence to smooth out difficulties, and of Maung On, whose services were no less valuable[1].

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[1] Pe Maung Tin, *New Htee for the Shwe Dagon Pagoda.*
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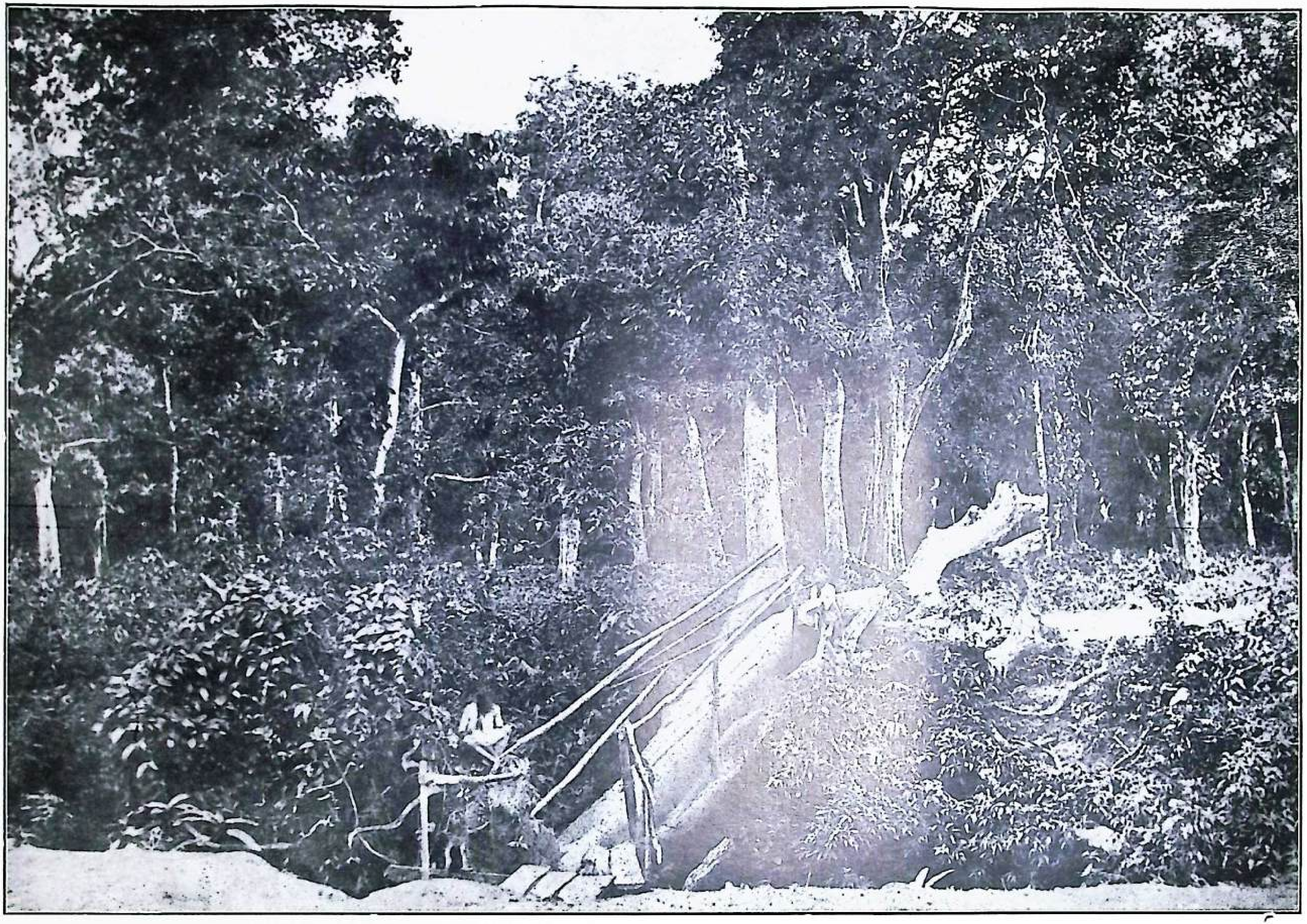
CHAPTER ELEVEN

MODERN RANGOON 1874—1882.

ACT VII of 1874 was essentially a conservative measure. Wide discretion was left to the Chief Commissioner both in regard to the actual constitution of the new Municipal Committees and in regard to the exercise of authority. The Chief Commissioner was empowered to establish in each town to which the Act was applied a Committee consisting of not less than three of the inhabitants, and he might at any time add to the number of members; thus the Chief Commissioner had power to determine the size of the Committee. The term of office of members was limited to two years. The Chief Commissioner might remove any member incapable of performing his duties or unwilling to perform them or convicted of crime. He was authorised to appoint members *ex officio* provided that "not less than two-fifths of the members of the Committee shall be persons other than salaried officers of Government." It was also provided that the Chief Commissioner might direct that the Committee be appointed by election, and in that case he was authorised to determine the manner of election and the qualifications of electors; but he was also authorised to appoint all members himself. He was further permitted to appoint the President of the Committee, though he might if he desired delegate this authority to the Committee. Thus the composition of the Committee was entrusted to the Chief Commissioner's almost unlimited discretion. Similarly the powers of the Committee were limited by the superior authority of the Chief Commissioner. The Committee was authorised to levy taxes on houses and land, on carriages, carts, boats and animals, to exact fees in respect of licenses for vehicles and boats plying for hire and licenses to construct markets, wharfs, and slaughter-houses; and to impose water and lighting taxes. No market or wharf or slaughter house, and no lodging-house for the accommodation of "persons not being natives of British Burma" might be erected without its license. It might undertake public works, and was made expressly responsible for the upkeep of roads, and for the cleanliness of tanks, drains, and roads; it might cause roads to be watered and lighted; it might manage hospitals and market-places; it might make provision for public health and safety; it might manage or give aid to schools. But these powers were strictly limited by the supervisory powers of the provincial government; for any bye-laws which the Committee might make for the application of its powers must receive the sanction of the Chief Commissioner and might not be altered or repealed without his approval. Control over police was given but the Committee was required to provide for police purposes such funds as the Chief Commissioner might require. Further, under Section 25 of the Act, "the Chief Commissioner may by order cancel, suspend, or limit any of the acts, proceedings, or rules of any Committee. The Chief

Commissioner may also abolish any tax or rate which shall have been sanctioned, but not so as to entitle any person to a refund". Thus the actions of the Committee were all subject to disallowance by the government of the province.

Nor did the Chief Commissioner make use of his discretion so as to permit election of the Committee. The Scheme proposed in 1862 had provided for a form of indirect election; but the elective element was entirely lacking from the Committee which took charge of its duties from the Town Magistrate, Captain R. C. Evanson, on the 1st August 1874. The membership of the Committee was fixed at thirty-two and of these six were *ex officio* members and the remaining twenty-six were all nominated. The *ex officio* members were the Commissioner of the Pegu Division, the Sanitary Commissioner, the Town Magistrate, the Assistant Magistrate, the Civil Surgeon, and the Executive Engineer of the Town Division. The names of the members who held these offices were respectively Colonel Ardagh, who had been the first Town Magistrate, Surgeon-Major W. P. Kelly, Captain Evanson, Mr. Perreau, Surgeon-Major H. Griffith, and H. M. Mathews. Of the twenty-six nominated members, ten were officials and one was a retired official, so that of the whole Committee of thirty-two only fifteen were non-officials. The nominated members were: Mr. P. H. Adlard, who was a partner in the firm of Messrs. A. Scott and Co. from 1858 to his death in 1896; Aga Ahmed Isphany, a leader of the Shiah community, who was a broker to Messrs. Gillanders Arbuthnot & Co.; Captain Arnot, the Master Attendant of the Port; Mr. C. J. Browne; Mr. W. D. Cruickshank (later Sir Dickson Cruickshank), Agent of the Bank of Bengal and later Secretary and Treasurer of that Bank; Mr. J. V. De Wet, Barrister and Government Advocate; Deputy-Surgeon-General C. M. Duff; Lt-Col. H. T. Duncan, officiating Secretary to the Chief Commissioner; Mr. R. S. Edwards, late Collector of Customs; Mr. W. C. Fairley; Mr. E. Fowle, owner of Lake House at the Royal Lakes, advocate, merchant, and Consul for Siam; Lt-Col. T. C. Hamilton, officiating Inspector-General of Police; Mr. L. Hernandez, of the Burma Company; Mr. Khoo Khin of Amoy, who shipped rice to the Straits and China; Mahomed Ibrahim Doopley, a prominent member of the Surati community and director of the Surati Bazaar Company, a trader in piece goods and precious stones; Mr. E. G. Mann, barrister; Mr. L. McIver (afterwards Sir Lewis McIver, M. P.), Madras Civil Service, Assistant Secretary to the Chief Commissioner; Moung On, Extra Assistant Commissioner; Moung Paw, Moung Po-gyee, and Moung Po-nyin, trustees of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda, and suppliers of gold-leaf and other ecclesiastical requirements, who lived in Edwards Street, then the residence of the wealthy Burmese merchants; Lt.-Col. W. S. Oliphant, Chief Engineer of the Public Works Department; Mr. C. F. Overbeck; Mr. S. Pinthong, proprietor of Messrs. S. Pinthong and Friends, who had his shop at the corner of 32nd and Merchant Streets and who presented to the public a well known as Pinthong's well which he had dug in 32nd Street; Mr. E. Rule, Deputy Accountant-General; and Mr. E. J. Sinkinson, Judge of the Small Cause Court.



Tripe: Photographs from Burmah.

TIGER ALLEY, 1855.

The large proportion of senior officers of Government in the Committee is noteworthy, and gives some justification to the critic who unkindly asked, "what is the use of putting natives on it? They will say 'Johukum' to anything proposed by anyone else"[1].

The Chief Commissioner did not delegate to the Committee the power to elect its own President, but appointed Captain Evanson who had been Town Magistrate since 1869. As the President was the executive officer of the Committee there was in effect continuity of administration.

The new Municipal Committee was in charge of an area of some ten square miles; but in 1876 the municipal area was extended to the north and east and the boundary thereafter ran along what is now Hanthawaddy Road and practically due east from the junction of that road with Prome Road as far as the junction of the Nat Chaung and the Pazundaung Creek and then beyond the Creek so that the eastern bank was included within the municipal limits. The municipal area was then, excluding the Cantonments, about thirteen square miles. The population of this extended area was, according to the Census of 1872, 89,745. The muncipal fund had, in the year 1873-74, an income of Rs. 2,72,000 and expenditure from the fund was in that year Rs. 2,73,000.

So far the administration of municipal business had been carried on in the office of the Town Magistrate and, in respect of Public Works, in the office of the Executive Engineer, Town Division. But the Committee needed its own office staff and its own public works establishment. Also, since the President was Town Magistrate, the head of the new Municipality would not have more leisure to devote to municipal affairs than had been the case in the past when, moreover, he had had the aid of the Assistant Magistrate. The new Committee therefore resolved to appoint a Secretary, and after advertisement in the public press in both Burma and India, selected out of sixty-nine applicants Mr. A. F. A. Hervey, who was Assistant Superintendent of Government Telegraphs in Rangoon and had formerly been Assistant Secretary to the Singapore Municipality. He was given a salary of Rs. 600 a month rising by annual increments of Rs. 50 a month to Rs. 800. Mr. J. Aikman of the Chartered Bank was appointed Auditor on Rs. 1000 a year. Mr. J. Short was appointed Head Clerk with a salary of Rs. 250 a month rising by Rs. 50 to Rs. 450. Mr. O. Deacon Clark, Deputy Engineer to the Bombay Municipality, was appointed Engineer on Rs. 1000 a month rising by Rs. 100 to Rs. 1,500. A part-time Health Officer on Rs. 100 a month was also appointed. These were very generous terms for those days, but the Committee took the view that liberal scales of pay were economical in the long run. Minor offices of clerks, etc., were filled by the President's nomination. The total staff for all departments of the administration was nineteen officers and clerks and six hundred and sixty-eight menials, and their total pay was Rs. 8,725 a month, or Rs. 1,04,700 a year. To these may be

[1] Nolan, *Sidelights on Rangoon in the Seventies.*

added the police force, which consisted of one Superintendent, six Inspectors, and two hundred and thirty-eight other ranks, the total cost of police being somewhat over Rs. 40,000 a year. The Municipality also contributed Rs. 500 a month towards the President's pay, and it is not surprising that concern soon began to be expressed about the cost of the municipal establishment.

For the management of detailed administration the Committee constituted itself into six sub-committees, for Conduct of Business, Finance, Public Works, Conservancy, Markets, and Legislative Business. The members appear to have commenced their duties with enthusiasm and there was at first no difficulty in obtaining a good attendance at meetings. The new administrative staff seemed to be working well, and in 1876 the President, Mr. McIver, reported with gratification that "with one or two exceptions, I believe, the Committee has a very efficient, hard-working staff."

The new Municipal Committee found itself faced with a very heavy responsibility in regard to the development of the town and its amenities. It had to find itself an office, since the Town Magistrate's office was no longer available for municipal work; and so the first Municipal Office was established in a two-storeyed building on the north side of Shafraz Road. Among more important duties which had to be undertaken was the improvement of public markets. So far the principal market had been the Surati Bazaar which had been originally erected as early as 1853 but had been rebuilt after the fire in 1857; there were other minor markets in addition, such as the Bogale Bazaar, whose origin is somewhat doubtful[1]. All the markets were privately owned, and they were in general in a most unhygienic condition. "In the matter of sanitary provision," it was recorded, "no bazaar in Rangoon at the present moment is capable, without enormous expenditure, of being put in a thoroughly satisfactory state; none of them are lofty enough, none of them have sufficient light, or a sufficiently convenient supply of water, while their stalls and floors are rarely of suitable material: so that in the matter of light, ventilation, water, drainage, and material, they are all defective, and, except the Sooratee bazaar, very defective"[2]. Of the Surati Bazaar it was stated that it was "situated in what may well be called the back slums of the town, surrounded by hovels, sewers, and filth; the wares, comestible and otherwise, of necessity saturated more or less completely with their foul emanations"[3]. Before the Committee came into existence the decision had already been taken to establish publicly-maintained bazaars, and the Committee implemented this decision. The first municipal bazaar was established at Botataung, but it was not a success; within six months of its opening the

[1] According to Agabeg, *Recollections and Reflections* p. 283 this bazaar was originally owned by Edward Fowle and was so named because he, being the son of Colonel Fowle, was known among the Burmese as *Bogale;* but according to *Twentieth Century Impressions of Burma* the bazaar was built by "an old resident of Burma, Mr. Bogalay." In the absence of any further reference to anyone of this name, Agabeg's explanation must be accepted.

[2] *Annual Report on the Working of the Rangoon Municipality* 1875-76.

[3] Gordon, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

majority of the stall-holders had left, many without having paid their rents: and though the stalls were then allotted rent-free for a time, even so the bazaar was never popular. More successful was the establishment of a municipal bazaar by the Strand, opposite the southern end of Mogul Street and China Street. This bazaar was brought into use in March 1876, although it was not in fact yet completed owing to the delay in receiving roof-tiles from England. It was unfortunate that when the tiles did arrive they were found to be too heavy for the roof-beams: it was suggested that extra timbering might be employed to carry the weight, and pending the instalment of the necessary supports, mats and corrugated-iron roofing were used; but in the end the use of the tiles had to be abandoned at a loss of Rs. 23,000. This market was graced with an ornamental fountain, fed from a well in Edwards Street, the design of the fountain being "a basket of flowers in a basin supported by four kneeling statuettes. The water issuing from the basket, after a graceful ascent of a few feet, falls into the basin, whence it flows into a large octagonal cistern, or ground basin, 20 feet in diameter, formed of cement concrete, with an ornamental cast-iron rim"[1]. Other municipal bazaars were erected in the suburbs, besides a temporary one placed in Fraser Street "in consequence of the measures which it was alleged the managers of some of the private bazaars were taking to prevent stall-holders from going to the Strand Bazaar."[2] This bazaar was kept open for only a short time, and was then converted into a municipal workshop for the engineering department.

Road-making and repairs to roads were also an important item in the administration of the Committee. So far the fifty or sixty miles of pukka roads for which the Committee now became responsible had been metalled only on a narrow central strip. The bullock-cart drivers naturally drove on the unmetalled edges of the roads for the sake of their animals' hoofs, with the result that Rangoon in the dry weather was clouded with dust while in the rains it was intolerably muddy. Orders were issued to the police to require all carts to drive on the metalled portion, but as the *Municipal Administration Report* for 1874-75 noted, "the order is not easily carried out; and, indeed, if all carts travel on the metal, there will be obstruction to carriages". The Committee therefore resolved to increase the amount of metalling to a width of thirty-two feet in the hundred-foot roads, twenty-five feet in the fifty-foot roads, and fifteen feet in the thirty foot roads: figures which clearly illustrate the very limited amount of metalling that had so far been effected. This work was, however, costly and difficult to execute; and the metalling of newly-constructed roads was equally difficult. From the beginning, road-making in Rangoon had been impeded by three principal factors, the scarcity of material, the difficulty of obtaining sufficient labour, and the necessity for

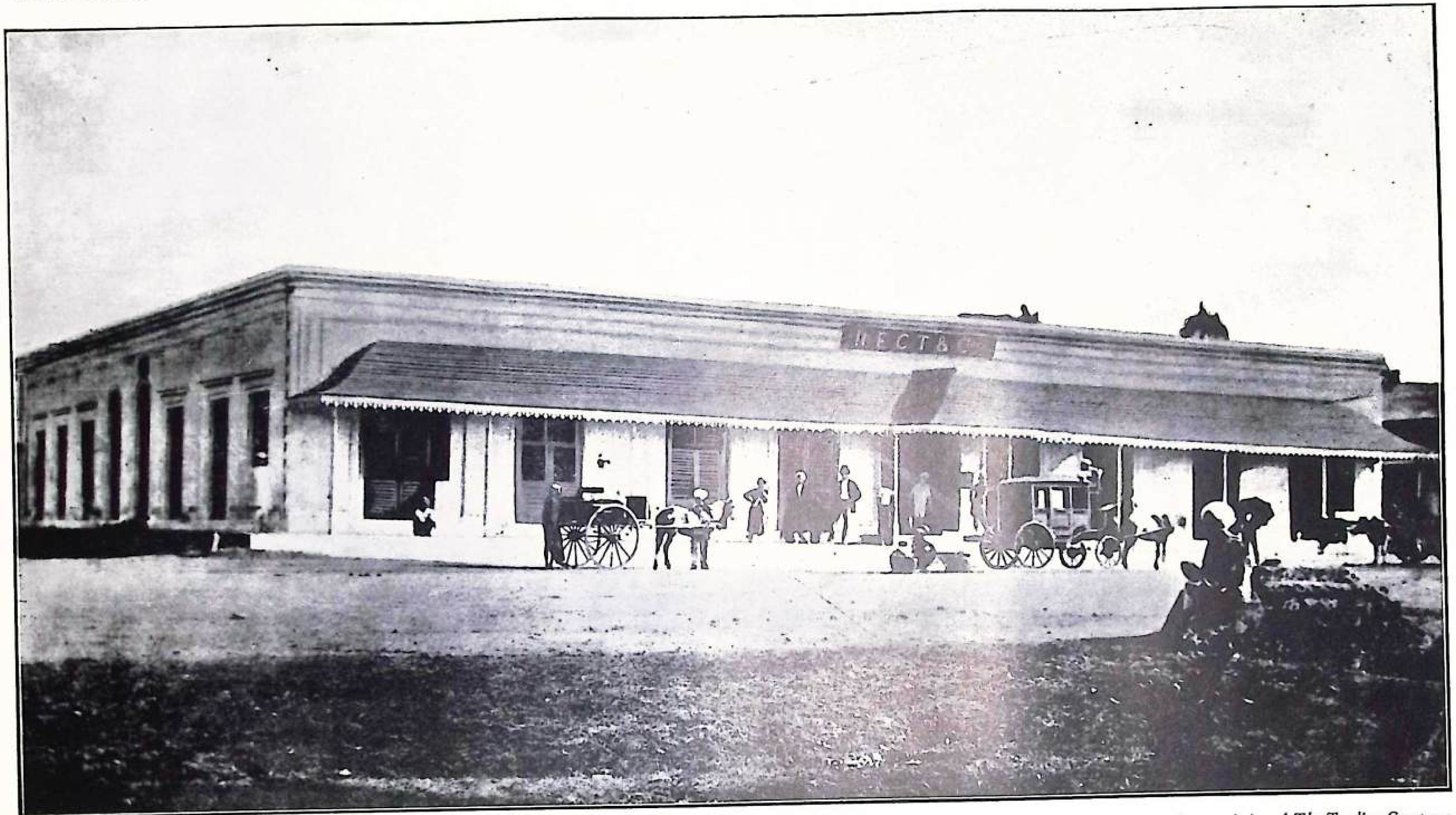
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[1] *Annual Report on the Working of the Rangoon Municipality*, 1876-77.
[2] *ibid.* 1875-76.

almost ceasing work in the rains. The second obstacle was partially eliminated as the population increased, but the others remained. The experiments with bricks and burnt clay had proved unsuccessful, and stone was clearly the only serviceable material; but stone was very difficult to obtain. The town was entirely dependent for road-metal upon ships' ballast, but as imports increased so the supply of ballast decreased. In 1877 the Municipal Engineer reported that "I have been unable to make any of the roads west of Godwin's Road for want of material. These roads are simply impassable during the rains either for carriages or foot-passengers". There were times, too, when coolies were not available and convict-labour had to be employed. Progress in road-making was further impeded by the circumstance that the roads had to be constructed on embankments passing across tanks and swamps, and these embankments had to be given time to consolidate. Further, there was much competition for ships' ballast, which was needed not only by the Municipality but also by the Public Works Department, the Military Engineering department, and the engineers engaged on constructing the Irrawaddy State Railway which was commenced in 1874. The effect of these circumstances was that to a considerable extent such funds as were available were expended on trying to maintain the existing roads, and for many years very little was done in the construction of new roads outside the town proper. Even within the centre of the town, the condition of the minor roads was very poor; in his report for the year 1878-79 the Municipal Engineer admitted that while the one hundred and the fifty foot roads were metalled, "a few of the 25 feet streets are also metalled with sand, but the others are left without any measures being taken to afford means for traffic, especially in the rains, when they are full of mud, ruts and pools of water". One road improvement was introduced in June 1875, however, when street-lighting commenced, 498 oil-lamps being lit on moon-less nights in the dry weather and on all nights in the rains. Lamp posts appear to have been put up in the 1850's, but were apparently not used.

These measures were no doubt beneficial, but more urgent was the problem of public health. The sanitary condition of Rangoon was as bad as could be. House refuse was no longer deposited in the River but was taken to the outskirts of the town and deposited there without any attempt to destroy it, as, indeed, is still the case: while in the absence of proper sewers no steps had been taken until 1873 for the disposal of night-soil, and cess-pools were the normal. This was the case not merely in the suburbs but in the town proper also. The population was increasing rapidly and the problem had by 1874 become one of grave urgency. In 1863 the population had been 61,138, and when the Municipal Committee took charge in 1874 it had risen to about 100,000. The increase was continuous, and the Census of 1881 gave a return of 124,524. With a population of over 100,000 it was intolerable that no scientific sanitary system had been installed. The population was, moreover, crowded into a small area, mainly within the town proper, for the inhabitants

PLATE No. 25



By permission of *The Trading Company.*

MESSRS. HEGT & CO.'S PREMISES, 1868.

had to live so far as they could in this central area where their work lay; and when even overcrowding could no longer accommodate them, there grew up on the fringe of the town, both east and west along the River though not to any extent northwards, and also along the banks of the Pazundaung Creek where many mills and timber-yards lay, a host of insanitary squatters' huts of the worst possible description. There was no sanitary system in any quarter of the town and there was no water system, the inhabitants depending for water on wells, some private and some public, many of which were contaminated from the defective latrines and cesspools that were in use. The effect of these conditions was that Rangoon was a thoroughly unhealthy place to live in. The returns of deaths do not, however, fully represent the real position. In 1870 the death-rate per thousand of population was recorded as 22.71; in 1872 it was 26.51; and for the five years 1870-74 inclusive the average was 21.95. But these statements represent only the deaths reported and there must have been numerous unreported deaths; it is apparent therefore that even the figure of 26.51 for 1872 is an understatement. The causes of most deaths were reported, vaguely, to be "fevers." The Municipal Committee thus found itself faced with a very serious problem which had existed for years and which the preceding administration had only in the last twelve months of its existence attempted to deal with.

In 1873 the Magistrate had made an attempt to improve the sanitary condition of the town by introducing a system of removing the contents of latrines to the River by carts. The system was, however, at first only voluntary on the part of occupants of houses, and apart from that it was difficult to obtain the necessary labour, for there were not many of the sweeper caste in Rangoon, and shortly after the system was introduced the municipal sweepers went on strike for higher pay. Sweepers were imported from Calcutta to break the strike, but it was still found necessary to work parts of the town by the expensive method of contract. When the scheme was at last working, the Magistrate ordered the closing of "the abominable filth-pits (hundreds of them within a few feet of public and private wells)" which had for years been contaminating the water supply of the town. The night conservancy system, which thus was made compulsory, was paid for by a special conservancy tax, but the tax was not popular and was frequently evaded: "the owners of lodging-houses and coolie-barracks, where men are packed away in hundreds, try in every possible manner to evade payment entirely, or to have the demand reduced. This has been met to some extent during the past year by frequently checking the assessment-rolls or enquiring into the truth of the house-owners' statements as to the number of people occupying their houses"[1].

The night-conservancy system, which in any case was applied only to the town proper and to part of Lanmadaw on the west and did not touch

[1] *Annual Report on the Working of the Rangoon Municipality*, 1876-77.

more than half the town as a whole, was obviously objectionable in some respects, however much it might be an improvement on having no system at all. The sulliage had to be carried through the town at night to two jetties, one at Botataung and one at Lanmadaw, and there cast into the water at the night ebb of the tide. Apart from the objections to the cartage of such matter through the town, it was found that much of the matter was carried back by the tide on to the banks, while the ships' masters complained bitterly about the stench to which they were exposed; and though an endeavour was made to remedy the situation by lengthening the two jetties, the remedy was not effective. But, as was pointed out, though "the whole system is disagreeable, it is about the best that can be introduced until the soil can be carried away in drains underground: and this cannot be accomplished until drains are constructed and there is a sufficient supply of water at hand to flush the drains frequently"[1].

The primary necessity was thus an efficient water-supply. This was essential not only for reasons of sanitation, moreover. The supply of drinking-water, derived from the wells, was not only generally contaminated, but was also deficient in quantity. The wells were no longer adequate for the needs of the growing population, and in 1876-77 there was a serious shortage. An effective fire-fighting system likewise could not be established until a plentiful water supply was provided, and this was a matter of urgency in what was still largely a timber-built city. The surface drains which had been built along the major roads also needed water for flushing; and the dusty roads needed watering in the dry season, the system of watering by carts filled from a cistern at the Strand and from the Canal proving very expensive.

The problem of water-supply had been under consideration even before the first Municipal Committee was appointed. Mr. H. M. Mathews, who had been Executive Engineer of the Town Division, Public Works Department, had proposed to supply drinking-water from the Royal Lakes, the banks of which were to be raised, while two new reservoirs were to be constructed to the south-east of the Lakes. He hoped to provide ten gallons of water per head per day by this measure. The new Municipal Engineer, Clark, however, produced a rival scheme; he was of opinion that the Royal Lakes could not supply more than five gallons per head per day in the dry weather, and for that reason recommended a more comprehensive scheme of obtaining water from the Pazundaung Creek forty miles above Rangoon and bringing the water down by an open canal. The cost of this measure would, however, be very high, whereas Mathews' scheme would involve an expenditure of only three or four lakhs. The Civil Surgeon, Dr. Cowie, moreover, examined the water of the Royal Lakes, and while he did not think it really potable, was of opinion that if filtered it might be used in the absence of anything better.

[1] *ibid.* 1877-78.

The Chief Commissioner appointed a committee to examine these projects, and this committee recommended that the Royal Lakes water should be used immediately for the Pazundaung quarter where the water shortage was most acute and where there was a good deal of cholera, while a survey should be made of an area of swamps and paddy fields between the Kokine and Prome roads at the 6th mile with a view to constructing a reservoir there that could supply the whole town. This survey was effected in the year 1877-78, and in the same year a start was made on conducting water from the Royal Lakes to the Botataung and Pazundaung areas, after some initial opposition from the Dalhousie Park Committee had been overcome. This work was quickly completed, and it was reported in 1879 that the incidence of cholera had been much reduced, there being only 29 cases in the whole town as against 499 in the previous year. At the same time an expenditure of Rs. 17,75,000 was sanctioned for the construction of the proposed reservoir at Kokine.

Another fresh development which followed the establishment of the Municipal Committee was the giving of assistance to education from municipal funds. There were, by the time that the Committee came into existence, 71 government and aided schools in the town, with 2,949 boys and 723 girls attending them; and in addition there were 85 private or monastic schools with 2,500 odd pupils. Out of a total population of over 100,000 there were thus only about 6,000 children attending school. The Municipality did not at first contribute to the cost of instruction, but in 1879-80, under pressure from Government, it made a contribution for the first time; the amount, given with reluctance, was Rs. 4,513.

The responsibilities with which the Municipal Committee was faced were much affected by the growth of the city's commerce. The development of means of internal communication by the opening of the Irrawaddy Valley State Railway from Rangoon to Prome in 1877, and the improvement in communications with Europe by the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, which, for example, caused Messrs. Henderson to abandon the Cape route in 1871, simultaneously with the reduction in sea-transport rates owing to the increasing use of steam-vessels, produced an enormous increase in trade. In the year 1873-74 imports had increased to a total value of Rs. 326,09,480, and exports to Rs. 345,66,488; and in 1877-78 imports amounted to Rs. 377,77,242 and exports to Rs. 441,43,015. The most noteworthy increase of trade lay in the export of rice. In 1867 there were only two steam rice-mills in Rangoon; in 1870 there were already seventeen. In 1864-65 the export of rice through the port amounted to 259,290 tons, of which perhaps half went to Europe; in 1872-73 when the Suez Canal route had become well established the shipment of rice was 415,028 tons, of which 361,714 tons went to Europe. The value of the Suez Canal to the merchants of Rangoon is indicated by the fact that in 1875 over eighty per cent of the import trade from Europe came by that route.

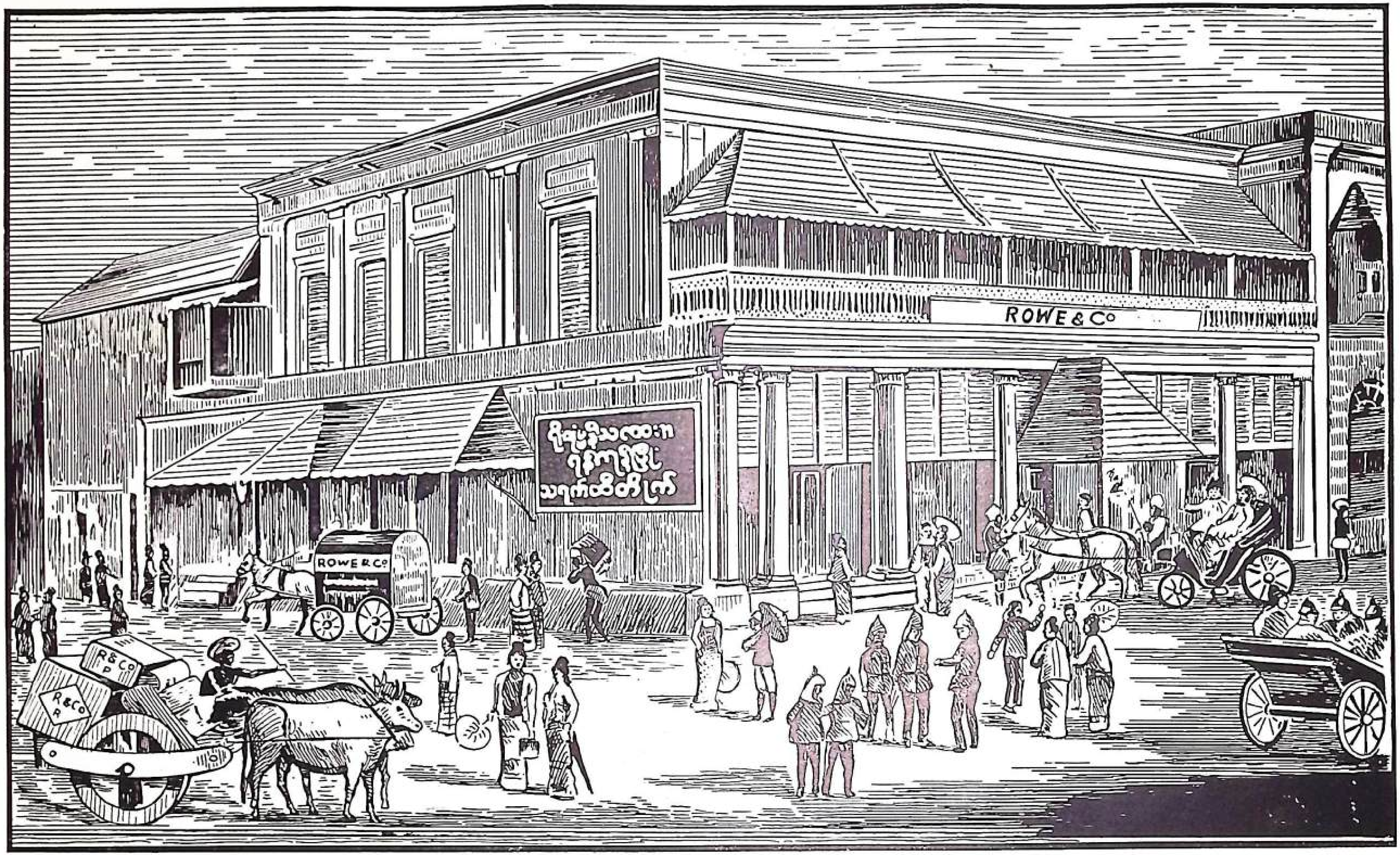
The rate at which trade was increasing at this time is shown by a comparison of the years 1873-74 and 1877-78. The value of rice exports in the former year was 226 lakhs of rupees, and in the latter year was 302 lakhs; of timber, 20 lakhs and 27 lakhs; of raw cotton, 6 and 22 lakhs; of cutch, 13 and 17 lakhs; of grain other than rice, 10 and 44 lakhs. Imports likewise increased, textiles from 150 lakhs to 174; coal, from 4 to 8 lakhs; earthenware and glass from 4 to 7 lakhs; metal goods from 9 to 11 lakhs; provisions from 7 to 8 lakhs; sugar from 4 to 7 lakhs. The greater strength of the mercantile community at this period is seen also in the establishment, this time on a firm foundation, of the Chamber of Commerce in 1877.

Shipping increased proportionately. In 1870-71 the number of vessels entering the port was 689, and their tonnage 313,998 tons; in 1880-81 the number of vessels was 874 and their tonnage 598,303 tons[1]. The need now became apparent for some reform of the port administration. In 1874 the Municipal Committee took charge of the shore management, but shortly afterwards, in 1876, a special Strand Bank Committee, consisting of the Master Attendant, the Collector of Customs, and the Executive Engineer, was appointed for the administration of the port and became responsible for regulating the anchoring of ships and the leasing of wharfs. To this Committee the revenues of the port were transferred, but it had to compensate the Municipality for the loss of income. The Master Attendant was still in charge of the pilots, but there was much restiveness among them and a committee of enquiry was appointed by the Chief Commissioner, as a result of whose recommendations it was resolved that Government would maintain a pilot-brig, the cost to be met by a deduction of twenty per cent from the pilots' fees, and that a standing committee consisting of the Collector of Customs, the Master Attendant, and the Senior Pilot, should manage the financial side of this arrangement and act as a medium of communication between the pilots and Government. The Master Attendant continued to have control of the pilots. There were at this period somewhat over twenty pilots, of whom three-quarters were Europeans, and their average emoluments were £540 a year in the case of the Europeans and £300 in the case of the non-Europeans. In pursuance of these decisions Government established two brigs; but the new system was resented, and towards the end of the year 1876 "a refractory spirit showed itself among the European pilots, requiring severe measures to stamp it out. One pilot was removed from the service, another was suspended for twelve months, and two for six months each. This seems to have had the desired effect, and the service has worked more smoothly since"[2]. But the pilots now complained that they were underpaid. It was noted that "a considerable change has of late occurred in the class of vessels that visit the Burma rice ports. Instead of sailing ships, large iron

[1] See Plate No. 27 — *The Strand, 1878;* and compare Plate 31 — *The Strand, 1920.* The preponderance of sailing craft in the earlier picture is noteworthy. Note also the primitive wharfage.

[2] *Annual Report on the Administration of British Burma,* 1876-77.

PLATE No. 26



By Permission of Messrs. Rowe & Co.

MESSRS. ROWE & CO.'S PREMISES, 1883.

steamers are now doing a great part of the rice-carrying trade. They are constructed on different principles from the older class of vessels, and can carry on a lighter draft of water a quantity of tonnage very much in excess of their registered tonnage. The rates of pilotage at the Burma ports being reckoned on the draft of each vessel and not on her tonnage, the pilots complain that they are losing money." Under these circumstances the twenty per cent deduction from their fees was naturally a standing grievance. A reform of the somewhat haphazard methods of port administration was needed, and the reform took the shape of the constitution of the Port Trust under the Port Commissioners Act, 1879. The new Trust assumed charge of its duties on the 1st June 1880.

The growth of commerce showed its effect in the formation in this period of new mercantile houses. The most notable of these was an undertaking which formed the foundation of the Burmah Oil Company. In 1871 the Rangoon Oil Company was founded in Glasgow to undertake the refining of crude oil from Upper Burma and refining works were established at Dunneedaw; but it proved impossible to depend on a regular supply of oil, and the price of this commodity was subject to great variations according to the commercial policy of the Burmese Government at any time. In consequence the company was wound up in 1876 and the property came into the possession of Mr. David Syme Cargill, a shareholder in the Company, who later developed it into the Burma Oil Company.

In 1879 the Chartered Mercantile Bank of India opened a branch in Rangoon, next to the office of the Chartered Bank on the Strand; but the collapse of the Chartered Mercantile Bank involved the closing of the Rangoon branch in 1892, and its history is left obscure.

The increased population was an encouragement to journalists, and in 1878 and 1879 two new periodicals were established: the *Rangoon Daily Mail*, which, however, lasted only about six months, and the *Daily Review*, which also came to a quick end. A Burmese periodical, the *Burma Herald*, which commenced publication at about the same time, had more success; and the two old-established newspapers, the *Times* and the *Gazette*, both found it possible in 1883 to undertake daily issue. Rangoon was also able to support a monthly magazine of a popular nature, *Our Monthly*, published by the Hanthawaddy Press for several years from 1880 onwards.

The population of the city was not merely increasing; it was changing in character. The opportunities for trade and for employment which were now available attracted a considerable Indian population. The Census of 1872 shows that there were some 16,000 Indians, being 16 per cent of the whole population, in the town; in 1881 there were over 66,000, being about 44 per cent of the whole. The Burmese population had actually undergone a slight decrease, from 69,000 to 67,000, and relatively had declined considerably, from nearly 70 per cent to about 50 per cent. Of the total population

in 1881, less than 49 per cent had been born in Rangoon[1]. Thus was commencing the process which has made Rangoon an Indian rather than a Burmese city. Indian immigration was not a new phenomenon in Lower Burma, for there had for centuries been a close connection between Burma and the eastern coast of India; but it was not till the development of communications in the later 1860's and the 1870's and the reduction of passage-rates consequent thereon, with also the establishment in 1873 of more frequent sailings between Rangoon and India, when the British India Steam Navigation Company introduced fortnightly sailings between Rangoon and Madras in place of the previous monthly sailings, that such immigration became possible on a large scale. The establishment in 1880 of the Asiatic Steam Navigation Company in competition with the British India line led to a further reduction of rates and so further accelerated immigration. This immigrant labour played an important part in the economy of Burma; for the development of paddy cultivation, which in Burmese days had been about 50,000 acres in the Rangoon district[2], but had extended to 443,900 acres in 1870-71 and 701,899 acres in 1877-78, was possible only by the employment of extraneous labour. The holdings of land in Lower Burma were in general too large to be worked by members of a single family, and hired labour was essential, but the population of the Delta being as yet comparatively small, Burmese labour was not available in sufficient quantities. Thus imported labour was essential. Government, moreover, adopted a definite policy of encouraging immigration as the only means of ensuring the cultivation of the land. In addition to the opportunities for cultivators, employment in the increasing number of rice-mills and saw-mills of Rangoon and in the port was readily available. Thus a vast number of labourers, agricultural and others, were attracted from India; and nearly the whole of this immigrant labour, coming from the Coramandel coast and Orissa, passed through

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[1] Census returns 1872 and 1881:

		1872	1881
1.	Burmese	59,918	64,948
2.	Karens		171
3.	Other Indigenous Races	9,388	1,890
4.	Total of 1 — 3	69,306	67,009
5.	Hindus	15,261	44,908
6.	Muslims	416	21,169
7.	Total of 5 — 6	15,677	66,077
8.	Chinese	3,181	3,752
9.	Europeans	} 3,867	2,856
10.	Anglo-Indians		1,487
11.	Armenians	187	55
12.	Jews	83	172
13.	Total population	98,138	134,176

The returns of 1872 are probably incomplete. Further difficulty arises in both that and later Censuses from the circumstance that returns were made primarily by religion and not by race; and also from the circumstance that the basis of classification is never constant from one Census to another. The above table contains therefore only an approximation.

[2] The Rangoon district of the governmental administration (as distinct from the Rangoon Municipal area) extended along the coast from the mouth of the Sittang to the mouth of the China Bakir, and on the north bordered the Henzada, Tharrawaddy, and Shwegyin districts.

the town of Rangoon, which was faced with the difficult problem of housing these travellers, many of whom stayed only temporarily in the city. The majority of immigrants arrived in November and December, at the beginning of the harvest, and the greatest emigration occured in the months of March, April, and May, when the harvest season was over: not that the labourers stayed in the country for a few months only, for it was not economic to pay a passage to and from Burma for a shorter period than three seasons, so that those who came in November of one year returned to their homes two years from the subsequent March or April or May. In their journey, both coming and going, they were accustomed to spend a few nights in Rangoon, and so required temporary accommodation during those periods; and for the accommodation of this temporary population and of the considerable Indian labour actually employed in the town and port, there grew up numerous lodging-houses which presented a new problem for the Municipal administration to solve. The problem does not appear to have grown acute till the later 1870's when uneasiness first began to be felt about the insanitary conditions under which the coolies lived. For reasons of economy a number of men would club together to rent a single room, and owing to the absence of suitably designed buildings and the lack of proper building and sanitary rules, gross overcrowding in the worst possible sanitary conditions occurred. It was in the year 1878-79 that the situation first began to arouse concern. In that year the Municipality noted that the coolies were living in "old pucka houses in a very dirty state, with few and small windows and doors, which they are very fond of keeping shut. The ground-floors of most of these pucka buildings are damp and generally soaking with house-slops and dirty water, together with other garbage. Many of these houses are very much overcrowded, and very little cubit (*sic*) space is allowed for each inmate. In one house in 29th Street, there were found in one room 23 inmates, the dimensions being only 18 by 14, and ventilation defective......The greater number of houses in 27th and 28th Streets are overcrowded"[1]. But the Municipality found that it was extremely difficult to take any effective measures towards the mitigation of these evils. Though lodging-houses were supposed, under the laws relating to municipalities, to be registered, the definition of the term "lodging-house" was too narrow, and also there were no suitable municipal regulations relating to sanitation and building. It was the case that overcrowding was contrary to the law, but only a Magistrate could pass orders for the reduction of the number of occupants of a house, and could do so only after the Health Officer had inspected the premises and given evidence of overcrowding that would satisfy a court of law. And even if such evidence were secured, there was little likelihood that the Magistrate would take adequate action, for the Magistrates seem to have been reluctant to enforce the law in municipal affairs. Thus in another case, that of encroachment on public roads, a house-owner who built an unauthorised "sun-shade" projecting over

[1] *Annual Report on the Working of the Rangoon Municipality*, 1878-79.

the public road was fined eight annas by the Magistrate, and no order for the removal of the sunshade was made. The Municipal Committee was thus powerless to enforce the law; and also had no authority to make bye-laws for such matters. Thus the new conditions which were developing in Rangoon were not provided for by new laws; while such attempts as the Municipality did make to enforce the older laws merely brought it into ridicule.

So, while Rangoon was rapidly growing in prosperity, a large section of its population was housed under the worst possible conditions.

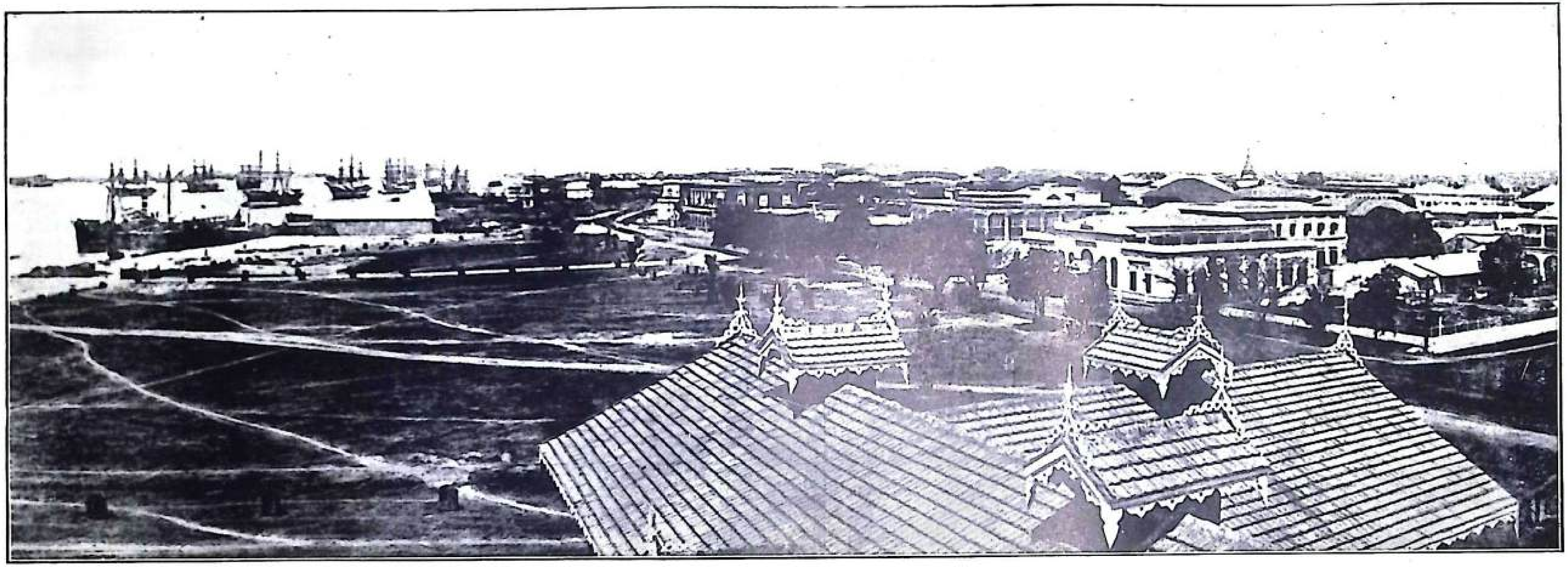
Another impediment to public health was the unsatisfactory condition of the cemeteries. When in 1853 orders were issued prohibiting burials within the town, land had been set aside for cemeteries and allotted to the various communities; so came into existence the cemeteries at Pazundaung. A cemetery was also established in the Cantonment area under military authority; originally the Cantonment cemetery was sited on the slope of the ridge to the west of Cemetery Road, below the Sale Barracks, but this ground was not used after 1854, when the existing Cantonment Cemetery was established. Both these cemeteries were used for the burials of private persons who died in the Cantonment limits as well as for the burial of soldiers[1]. But besides these lawful burial-grounds, unauthorised cemeteries grew up outside the old limits of the municipal area, such as the burial ground to the north of Bagaya Pongyi Road. Furthermore, by 1880 the legal cemeteries within the town were overcrowded. The Health Officer reported that the depth of graves was commonly not more than one-and-a-half feet, and that a serious danger to the public health was created by this circumstance. Wells and tanks in the vicinity of the cemeteries were being contaminated, he considered. The establishment of healthier conditions was obviously called for, but nothing appears to have been done, for the control of the cemeteries did not actually lie with the Municipal Committee but with the trustees[2]. It was not, indeed, for another twenty years that any steps could be taken to remedy the position; then, in 1900, the Committee acquired two sites, one at Hanthawaddy Road and the other at the east of Rangoon, for use as burial grounds, and in 1907 most of the older cemeteries were closed.

The provision for public safety was also inadequate, although the Municipal Committee had early recognized its responsibilities in this matter. In 1875 it purchased "four manual fire-engines of the newest pattern, and fully equipped with ladders, hose, buckets, etc." These were kept at the police stations at Edwards Street, Pazundaung, and Kemmendine, and at the Strand Bazaar. The system was somewhat primitive, however, for the engines had to be hauled to the scene of fires by manual-labour and fed from water-carts; and there was no professional fire-brigade other than a small paid staff whose duty was to look after the maintenance of the engines. For

[1] See Appendix D: *European Cemeteries in Rangoon.*

[2] *Annual Reports on the Working of the Rangoon Municipality*, 1881-1882, 1882-1883.

PLATE No. 27



By permission of J. W. Darwood, Esq.

THE STRAND, 1878.

the actual firefighting a volunteer brigade was organised. The system was far from effective, for in March 1877, a fire which broke out in Kemmendine destroyed four hundred houses, the total damage to property being Rupees 2,19,410; and again in the following year a fire which began in Messrs. Todd Findlay and Co's bazaar at Pazundaung did damage to the extent of Rupees 1,62,130, two hundred and seventy-eight houses being destroyed. It was complained that little or no assistance was given on such occasions by the inhabitants of the town, who "will calmly watch the progress of a fire, refusing to render any assistance in hauling or working an engine. I have seen the police try in vain to make them assist".[1] It may be doubted, however, whether untrained efforts in such cases would be of much value. The ineffectiveness of the fire-fighting system was such that Sir Charles Bernard, early in his career as Chief Commissioner of British Burma, found it necessary to address the President of the Municipal Committee, Major Evanson, "after that nasty article in the newspapers." The "nasty article" was occasioned by a fire which, breaking out in Edwards Street on the early morning of the 14th December 1880, as a result of an explosion in the house of a Burmese jeweller who was experimenting in melting metals, devastated a large part of west Rangoon, with resultant damage estimated by the Municipal Committee at Rs. 5,82,101, but by the local press at nineteen lakhs. The Municipality stated that the extensive nature of the damage was largely due to "the narrowness of the streets, obstructed by the inhabitants, who, trying to save their goods, placed them outside their houses, and created a great difficulty in getting either the engines or the water-carts along them," and was of opinion that the volunteer brigade did much useful work in preventing the fire from extending westward and involving the Surati Bazaar. The newspaper account which appeared in the *Rangoon Gazette* on the 16th of the month stated, however, that though the fire broke out at about 2 a.m. the engines did not reach the scene till an hour later, although two of them were now housed in a new fire-station just erected in the Sule Pagoda Road, and that even when the engines did arrive they could not be brought into play for some time owing to want of water; while "the nasty article" gives an account which differs even more emphatically from that of the Municipality. In the same issue of the *Gazette*, that of the 16th December, under the title of "Incidents of the Late Fire, by a Wanderer," the article states that "about 3 a.m...... a municipal engine was pouring water on the bazaar at a very safe distance from the fire, and there were no signs of help although it had been raging for an hour......I came across an engine being slowly dragged along, I thought now there may be a chance of work, and I applied myself to the man in charge. Work? How can we work, *there is no hose*......I wandered on and came across the engine again with the hose on and *no water*. Why? The suction hose had been left behind, and even then, at 4 o'clock, the water carts had not

[1] *ibid.* 1880-81.

arrived. . . . . .I wandered back to the engine which was feebly endeavouring to squirt at the end of a small house. . . . . .but being at least twenty feet away, was unable to get at it. Buckets did not sufficiently fill the tanks of the engine and the hose had burst. In fact it was found to be rotten. . . . . A number of Jews and Surrattees came up, and said the Sircar taken from us plenty of taxes, but they do nothing to help us. Where are the pumps, where are the protectors of us poor men?. . . . . .Unsophisticated men, you really need protection; you have lived so long in Burma, and yet ask such questions?" Bernard felt constrained to admit, in his letter to Evanson, that the article was justified. "There was," he wrote, on the evidence of his own observation and of what he had since heard, "no organisation or prearrangement of the people (police or other) or appliances to be employed against the fire. At some of the places where attempts were made to cut off the fire, no one seemed to be in command on the spot. No one seemed to be acquainted with the right mode of arranging carts for bringing up water. The streets were clogged with carts and people none of whom were adequately worked. At two sides, notably where the Rangoon Engine was, I saw no axes or ropes or other appliances for levelling houses. Nothing was done to summon the Europeans to assist though they were awaiting such a summons and were ready to come. Nothing was done to summon the private engines, of which there is one fully equipped and exercised once a week at nearly every rice mill. There was a great want of buckets and ladders." He added that in his opinion effective organization could have saved the blocks between 25th and 28th Streets; and that the China quarter was saved, not by the fire engines as the Municipal Committee opined, but by a change of wind. [1]

The Municipal Committee recognised the justice of these observations, and admitted that the situation had "created a serious panic" in the town. Two steam fire-engines were at once ordered from Messrs. Merryweather & Son, and the fire-brigade was reorganised. The Municipal Engineer, Mr. Clark, was directed to form a new volunteer brigade from among the municipal employees who were to be paid Rs. 2-8 a month for this work, and the services of Colour-Sergeant Rolfe, of the 77th, were engaged to drill the volunteers once a week. The new engines arrived during the succeeding year, but the system of manual traction was still used, with as a result much delay in getting the engines to the scene of fire. A pair of Burmese ponies were tried, but the engines were too heavy. It was then proposed to make some arrangements with owners of hack-carriages for the use of their ponies, but this system was likewise not satisfactory.

The police system was also not functioning satisfactorily. When the Municipal Committee assumed charge of the force in 1874, the police numbered only 245 men of all ranks: and as of these 245 a number were engaged on court duty and some on clerical work the number actually avail-

[1] *Bernard Ms.*

able for ordinary patrol duty was only 161. The proportion was thus not more than one constable to every 670 of population, as compared with one to 539 in Calcutta and one to 470 in Madras. Some improvement was effected by the enlargement of the force in 1879-80 so as to bring the total strength up to 300 men. But still the force was not in very good condition; dismissals for misconduct were numerous, and it was candidly admitted that the police were "a much-abused body"[1].

In other ways as well the administration of the town was defective. Financial difficulties very quickly arose. There were irregularities such as unauthorised transfers of money from one budget-head to another; and, still more serious, there was difficulty in getting in the revenues. Under the Town Magistrate's administration, Rangoon has been divided into seven districts, each with a thugyi who collected the municipal tax; but as the number of taxes increased with the introduction of lighting tax and conservancy tax, with separate collectors for each form of impost, the system became unduly cumbersome. The Committee therefore divided the town into fourteen divisions, each with one thugyi who was responsible for collecting all taxes. This should have been a convenience to both Committee and tax-payer; but unfortunately it was complained by the Committee as early as 1876-77 that "the thoogyees cannot by any means be congratulated upon the year's work. In a few of the divisions (and a few only) are the duties of the thoogyees attended to as they should be, or in the manner in which they might be if a proper amount of intelligence and energy were displayed; and this is not by any means for want of urging." Such complaints were reiterated in every *Annual Report*; but it was also admitted that the collection of revenue was far from easy. It was stated that "amongst the house-owners in the town are many worthless speculators,—men who are almost entirely in the hands of the money-lenders, and others whose means are so small that it is a matter of the greatest difficulty to recover taxes from them at all; in other words, many are house-owners who are not in a position to be so, and who in other cities would be only lodgers." The system of leasing land instead of selling it, introduced by Government in 1872, was held responsible for this. It was further stated that much of the property in the town was heavily mortgaged, and the owners did not care if their houses were attached and sold up, since the mortgages generally exceeded the value. House-holders who were only tenants, moreover, evaded the taxes by continually changing their residences. But also the thugyis were held largely responsible for the shortage of revenue. In the year 1878-79 two were dismissed; in the following year four were dismissed, one was discharged as a leper and his accounts were then found not to be in order, two resigned, and one became insane; so that out of the fourteen who began the year's work, only six remained at the end. Nor was it easy to replace them

[1] *Annual Report on the Working of the Rangoon Municipality*, 1875-76.

by suitable men, for "the appointment of Thoogyee in Rangoon has become very unpopular; in fact, utterly unsought after by the well-to-do and respectable class." This is hardly surprising since the thugyi's income, derived from a commission on his collections, averaged only about Rs. 150 a month out of which he had to pay his clerks.

Furthermore, there was a disastrous episode in the municipal office. Major Evanson was on leave during the years 1875 and 1876, and his place was taken first by Mr. McIver and later by Lieutenant C. H. E. Adamson. In the short time that he held office, Lieut. Adamson realised, what his predecessors had failed to realise, that the Secretary, Hervey, who according to McIver took "a hearty interest in all branches of his work" and "suggested and carried out many improvements in different departments" and showed himself "most energetic and zealous in all he has undertaken," was in fact thoroughly unsatisfactory. Adamson, who had been for some months without an Assistant Magistrate, had been too busy to enquire into the matter himself, but when Evanson resumed his duties in February 1877, Adamson suggested that certain matters required investigation. The investigation revealed that Hervey, though perhaps not personally dishonest since nothing in the way of embezzlement was actually proved against him, was heavily in debt and had been borrowing money from his subordinates, even from the menial staff. He was allowed to resign; but Ward, the Revenue Accountant, was dismissed for denying a monetary transaction with Hervey, and Abraham, the Accountant in the Engineer's office, who was accused of defalcations amounting to over Rs. 5,000 was put on his trial and sentenced to three year's rigorous imprisonment. Clark, the Engineer, was held personally responsible for Rs. 1,790 of Abraham's defalcations on account of his negligent supervision of his subordinate.

Yet the municipal administration was not cheap; the establishment of the central office alone cost more than one half of the entire Secretariat establishment of the whole province. But despite the heavy cost, no branch of municipal administration appears to have been functioning in a satisfactory manner, though Mr. McIver in his *Annual Report* for the year 1875-76 had asserted that "the system of giving liberal salaries has proved successful." When Sir Charles Bernard assumed the office of Chief Commissioner in 1880 one of the first things he did was to address Major Evanson, now Deputy Commissioner of the Rangoon District but still President of the Municipal Committee, on the remarks which he had already come across in the local press. He observed that there were attacks on the administration in regard to "road obstructions when repairs go on, superfeted smells, hackney carriages, town land arrangements, town police, gambling, and such like matters," and that he could not help feeling "some anxiety unless I know that all such complaints are investigated"[1].

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[1] *Bernard Ms.*

Clearly it was far from well with the administration by the Municipal Committee. The reason was principally that the first enthusiasm with which it had started its work had soon worn off and the members were no longer interested in their duties. It had proved impossible to maintain the sub-committees, which had now been reduced to two; and it was often impossible to obtain the quorum of only seven members at meetings. But since meetings averaged forty a year this is perhaps not surprising. The poor attendance, it was stated, "resulted principally from the majority of members being employed in Government offices or in business, and departmental or personal convenience had sometimes to be sacrificed in order to permit of attendance at the Municipal Committee room"[1]. An attempt was made to remedy the situation by not filling vacancies in the Committee, which by 1881 was thus reduced from thirty-two to seventeen members, of whom five were *ex officio*. Even so, the average attendance at meetings in 1881-82 was only nine. The system of the nominated Committee had broken down within ten years of its inauguration.

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[1] *Annual Report on the Working of the Rangoon Municipality,* 1881-82.

CHAPTER TWELVE

MODERN RANGOON: 1882—1898.

THE next stage in the history of the municipal administration is the period of the first elective Municipal Committee. Developments in the direction of local self-government were taking place throughout British India at this time, as is indicated by Lord Ripon's Resolution on Local Self-Government of the 18th May 1882 urging upon the provincial governments the desirability of introducing the system of election into local bodies; and the provincial government in Burma had, even before the promulgation of that Resolution, considered the adoption of such a system. Advantage was now taken of the provision already existing in the Act of 1874 to make rules for the direct election of the majority of the Rangoon Municipal Committee. Under these new rules, the Chief Commissioner directed that eighteen of the inhabitants of Rangoon should be elected and six nominated by the provincial government, to form the future Municipal Committee. The term of office of members was to be two years; the qualifications of a voter were that he must be over twenty-one years of age, and must within the limits of the Municipality possess property worth Rs. 500 or pay a rent of not less than Rs. 10 per mensem or pay rates and taxes of not less than Rs. 5 per annum; a candidate for election must be over twenty-one years of age, must be a registered voter, must have paid all rates and taxes up to date, and must possess house-property worth at least Rs. 5,000 or rent property at not less than Rs. 50 per mensem or pay rates and taxes of at least Rs. 60 per annum. The principle of communal representation was introduced into the system of election so as to give "proper weight to the European minority of the electors, who would have been entirely deprived, as they are in India, of any voice in the management of their own affairs had the election been held by local areas and not by race"[1]. The franchise was conservative: the number of registered electors in each constituency was—Europeans, 779; Burmese, 3,884; Muslims, 1,204; Chinese, 637; Hindus, 745; Karens, 26; making a total of 7275 voters; whereas the population by race as shown at the Census of 1881 had been—Europeans, etc., 4,570; Burmese, etc., 66,838; Muslims, 21,169; Chinese, 3,752; Hindus, 44,908; Karens, 171; making a total of 134,176. Thus only approximately 5 per cent of the population were enfranchised.

The first elections were held on the 23rd June 1882 and the new Committee took charge of its duties on the 29th of that month. In the Committee there were five representatives of the Burmese Community, who at first voted as one constituency but from 1885 onwards in five local constituencies; five

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[1] *Annual Report on the Administration of British Burma,* 1882-83.

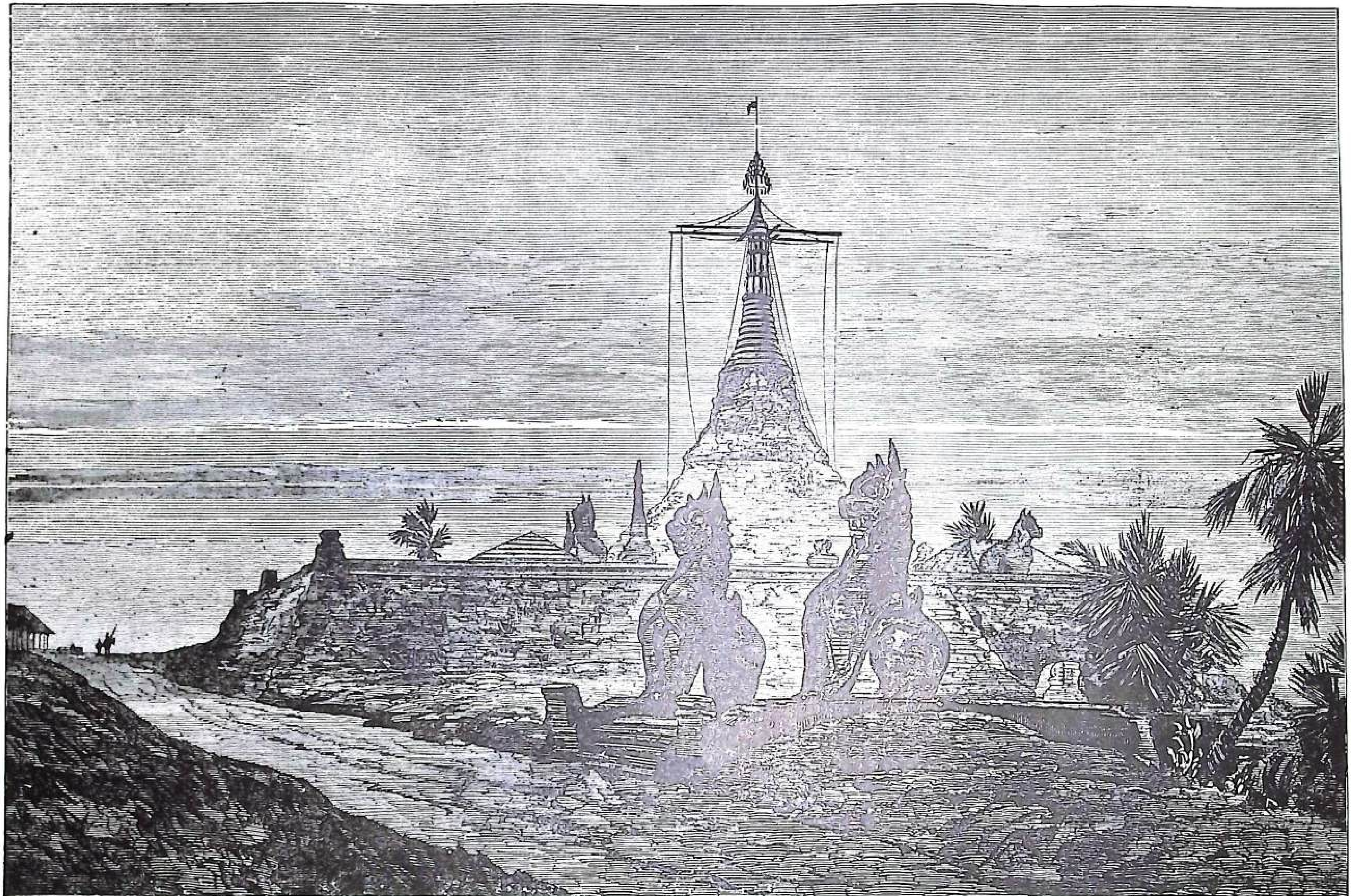
representatives, of the European, American, Eurasian, Armenian, Jewish and Parsi electorate; one representative of the Chinese Community; two of the Hindus; and two of the Muslims. In addition, one member was elected by the Chamber of Commerce, and six were nominated by the provincial government[1]. The rules provided for the election of two Chinese representatives and one Karen representative, but only one Chinese member was returned, and the Karen community did not take advantage of its opportunity. The President was to be elected by the Committee, but the members selected the Deputy Commissioner of the Rangoon District, Major M. C. Poole, as their first President, and though when he resigned eight months after election he was succeeded by Mr. Sherlock Hare, a European elected member, Mr. Hare himself was succeeded five months later by the new Deputy Commissioner, Major H. R. Spearman.

The Committee was responsible for the administration of a town of over 130,000 inhabitants, and enjoyed a revenue of over ten lakhs of rupees. It had from the first wider responsibilities in some directions than its predecessor. The late Committee had made a small contribution towards the cost of education, but had borne no direct responsibility; in 1882, however, the management of all Government schools except normal and practising schools, and special and technical schools, was imposed on the Committee, which thus became responsible for the greater part of public education in the town, as well as for the management of the grant-in-aid fund for all aided schools; the system of "payment-by-results" was adopted by the Committee. From the 1st April 1883 the full charge of the General Hospital was also undertaken by the Municipality, though Government continued to provide the pay of two Civil Surgeons who worked there; and the municipal establishment was increased in 1882 by the appointment of Dr. Pedley as full-time Health Officer. On the other hand, the control of the police force was taken from the Municipality and vested in the provincial government.

The transference of the police from the control of the municipality to that of the provincial government appears to have been necessitated by the failure of the police force to deal with the numerous dacoities which at that period troubled the town. Political conditions were uneasy, as a result of strained relations with the Burmese King, and the province of British Burma was in general restless. It was complained that daring robberies were committed nightly in the town, and that apart from the failure of the police to meet this situation, the granting of an increased number of licenses to sell arms and ammunition had enabled every bad character to secure weapons. In 1882 a

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[1] The members of the first elective Committee were — *Burmese* U Nyun, U Po Myin, U Myat San, U On Gaing, U Kywet Ni; *European* C. R. Cowie, S. Hare, J. Stuart, Dr. T. F. Pedley, Rev. J. E. Marks; *Chinese* L. Shain Tuck; *Hindu* P. C. Sen, Bugwan Das; *Muslim* Aga Ahmed Ispahany, Ibrahim Adjim; *Chamber of Commerce* F. C. Kennedy; *nominated* Major Poole, H. Griffith (Civil Surgeon), J. H. Gilbert, (Principal, Government High School), U Po Gyi (Honorary Magistrate), U Po Hnyin (Honorary Magistrate), U Shwe Waing (Akunwun).



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THE SIGNAL PAGODA AT RANGOON, 1875.

petition on this subject was submitted to the Chief Commissioner by the principal residents of Rangoon, and the Chief Commissioner, in forwarding the petition to the Commissioner of the Pegu Division, commented severely on the disgraceful state of affairs, pointing out that the enforcement of law and order was the primary duty of a civilised government. The transfer of the police to the provincial government was, however, not in itself sufficient to remedy the situation; it was found necessary to invoke the aid of the military to provide a reserve force for the suppression of dacoits, and sanction was given to the employment of a special Superintendent of Police for dacoity duty. A further outbreak of a similar nature occurred after the annexation of Upper Burma in 1886, although the police force, which numbered only 305 in 1881, had been increased to over 600 by that date[1].

The new Committee constituted itself into five sub-committees, *viz.* Finance and Legislative, Health and Conservancy, Buildings and Public Works, Education, and Hospital sub-committees. In addition, *ad hoc* sub-committees were appointed from time to time to report on, *e.g.* the water supply, and the adulteration of food. The standing sub-committees were later organised into four, *viz.* Finance, Public Works and Sanitation, Hospitals, and Markets.

The provincial government was at first well pleased with the work of the new committee. In its first year, it was noted, the Committee members had "looked more fully into municipal affairs and displayed more vigilance for the well-being of the town than their predecessors; they have taken up, with activity and good sense, the educational work entrusted to them; their meetings have not, so far, been devoted to excessive speechifying; and the majority of them are decidedly against any addition to the already heavy municipal expenditure. Members, especially the Burmese, meet and take counsel with their constituents from time to time. Much important municipal work has still to be done, and sometimes mistakes may be made, but there is already ground for expecting that the new Municipality will do its work better than did the old"[2]. This optimism does not seem to have been shared by the general public, however. Before long complaints began to appear once more in the press that "there have been many instances in which the behaviour of the elected members in Rangoon has not differed very considerably from that of the nominated portion", for, once they were elected, "they lose a good deal of that inquisitive, democratic spirit, which a great writer has said, is the only guarantee the people have against the despotism and tyranny of their rulers"[3]. That the elected members did not differ in their attitude towards their duties from the former nominated members was clearly the case, for it quickly became apparent that some of them were, like their predecessors, not really

[1] Sir Charles Crosthwaite, *Pacification of Burma*, p. 23, states that when he arrived in Burma in 1883 he found that gang-robbery was of common occurrence in the neighbourhood of Rangoon.

[2] *Ibid.* 1881-82.

[3] *Our Monthly*, V. pp. 464, 522.

interested. Thus as early as 1883 a Hindu representative, Bugwan Das, having absented himself from meetings for over three months, was declared by the provincial government to have ceased to be a member. But on the other hand the electorate was equally apathetic: when an election was held to fill the vacancy, no candidates were forthcoming, and the Chief Commissioner reappointed Bugwan Das. The average attendance at meetings of the twenty-three members in the year 1883-84 was only ten.

Nor did the new Committee command public financial confidence, for when a loan of four lakhs of rupees was sought in 1883, the tenders received totalled no more than Rs. 37,000, and financial embarrassment was avoided only by application to the Bank of Bengal.

The status of the Committee was changed by the Burma Municipal Act of 1884; the Municipality was constituted a body corporate which had "perpetual succession and a common seal, with power, subject to the provisions of this Act, to acquire and hold property both movable and immovable, and to transfer any property held by it, and to contract and to do all other things necessary for the purpose of its constitution, and may sue and be sued in its corporate name." The Act (XVII of 1884) which was based, with but few modifications, on an Act recently adopted for the Punjab and not expressly drafted to suit conditions in Burma, made little difference in the effective powers of the Municipality, however. It defined the powers and duties of the Committee in more detail; and in one or two minor respects gave slightly greater authority. Thus the Committee was now authorised to make rules for the conduct of its own business; statutory sanction was given to the scavenging-tax; detailed provision was made for assessment of taxes; certain powers were defined in detail so that the general provisions of section 39 of the Act of 1874 empowering the Committee to take measures "for promoting public health, safety, comfort and convenience," were supplemented by precise authorisation to undertake such duties as providing a water-supply and managing fairs and exhibitions; and detailed directions in regard to sanitary matters and the making of building-rules were given. The general provision that the Municipality might manage or aid schools was replaced by an express direction to establish a school fund, the annual contribution to which should be fixed by Government. But the stating in greater detail of the Committee's duties and powers did not involve the grant of any greater degree of autonomy. The provincial government was again empowered to determine the number of members of the Municipal Committee, provided that not more than one-fourth should be nominated or appointed *ex-officio*; but when circumstances gave justification Government might nominate a larger proportion or even all the members; and Government also was given power to appoint to vacancies not filled by election. Again, the rules for the conduct of elections and the determination of the qualifications of electors and candidates were left to the discretion of the provincial government, which might also fix the term of office of Committee members up to a maximum of three years. Government,

again, might remove any member who absented himself from all meetings for three consecutive months. The Committee was, however, given the power to elect its own President, but again the provincial government might reserve this authority to itself. The President was in either case to hold office for one year only, but was capable of reappointment. Still, as under the Act of 1874, the sanction of Government was required for the imposition of taxes, and government might suspend any tax which seemed excessive. Rules made by the Committee required the confirmation of Government. Even the pay of the Secretary might not be fixed without sanction; and government reserved power to order a reduction of the number of servants of the Committee if the number was excessive. Government might cause an inspection to be held of the property of the Committee, of any of its works, of its books and documents; might call for statements, accounts, and reports of the proceedings at meetings; and might suspend any resolution or order of the Committee if it seemed to be *ultra vires* or liable to lead to a breach of the peace or likely to cause injury or annoyance to the public or any section of the public. In emergency, Government might call on the Committee to effect any work necessary in the interests of public service or safety, and in default might itself direct the execution of such work at the expense of the Municipality. Sanction of government was required for any contract or work involving an expenditure of more than Rs. 20,000. Loans were made a first charge on the municipal revenues. Government reserved power to supersede the Committee if it showed itself incompetent or in any way abused its powers. While the provision of section 25 of the Act of 1874 did not figure in the new Act, it remains that the control of Government over the Municipality was as effective and complete as it had been before the Act was passed.

The Act came into force on the 1st January 1885, and under the rules promulgated by Government the Committee consisted of five representatives of the Burmese Community, five of the European and allied communities, two of the Muslims, two of the Hindus, two of the Chinese, and one of the Karens, in addition to a representative of the Chamber of Commerce, a representative of the Port Trust and six nominees of Government. The term of office of members was fixed at two years. The qualifications for members laid down by Government were principally that the member must be over twenty-one years of age, must be a registered elector for his constituency, must have paid his municipal taxes to date, must own property in land or buildings worth Rs. 5,000 or more or rent property at not less than Rs. 50 a month or pay not less than Rs. 50 a year in municipal taxes or be a partner or manager in a business paying taxes of Rs. 50 or more a year or be a lodger paying at least Rs. 250 a month. An elector must be over twenty-one years of age, must own immovable property worth at least Rs. 500 or pay rent of not less than Rs. 10 a month or municipal taxes of not less than Rs. 5 a year or be a lodger paying at least Rs. 50 a month or be a partner in or manager of a business

renting property at Rs. 10 a month a more, or be a servant living in quarters worth at least Rs. 10 a month.

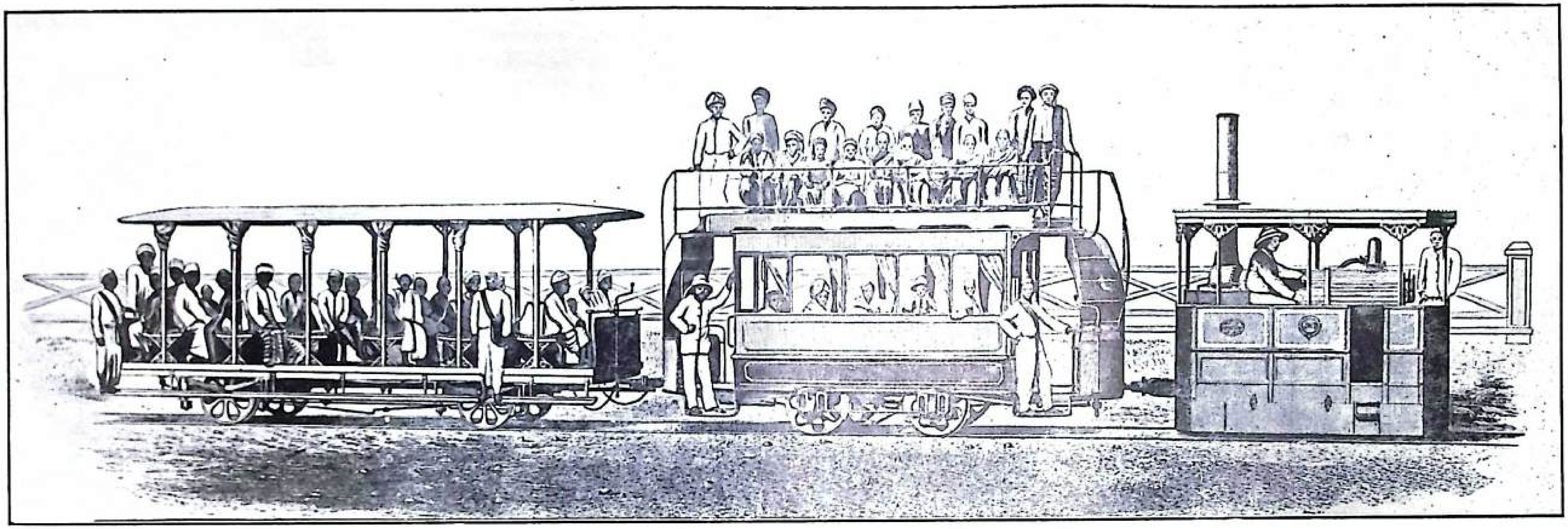
Thus the new Act made no effective change in the constitution of the Committee or in the qualifications of members or electors.

A general election had been held under the old rules in the previous November and the members then elected were continued in office under the new Act. At this election a member had been elected to represent the Karen community. But the apathy of the electorate continued. The Karen, Muslim and Chinese representatives were returned unopposed; and though in other communities there were contests, out of 3,884 Burmans on the register only 2,042 voted, of 779 Europeans only 401, and of 745 Hindus only 262. Again at the general election of 1886 there were not even any nominations for the Hindu and Karen constituencies, and the separate Karen constituency was thereafter abolished. In 1890 the Hindu and Chinese communities returned only one member each instead of two; and it was not till 1902 that there was a contest in the Chinese constituency. In 1894 the Burmese returned only two representatives instead of five, and the Chinese one instead of two. The vacancies were filled by nomination of Government. Although in general the European Community displayed more interest, this was not always the case; thus in 1891 when two vacancies occurred through resignation there were no candidates for election, and in 1894 only one candidate stood for five vacancies. As was stated in the press on one occasion, "It is to be regretted that greater public interest is not displayed in such an important public matter as the choice of public representatives. Our community is so largely composed of 'birds of passage' and of Europeans who only come here to make money and to say 'goodbye' to the province for ever thinking themselves lucky that they have not left their bones in the Poozoondoung cemetery, that it is perhaps hoping too much to think that people will take much interest in who shall form a fraction of the Rangoon Municipal Committee. But whether we are here for six months or a life time, we should at any rate be sufficiently unselfish to try and get worthy representatives on the Municipal Board"[1].

The new Municipal Act, moreover, was soon found to be defective. It was an omnibus act, applying to all municipalities in Burma, whereas the circumstances of Rangoon were so different from those of smaller towns that it was most unsatisfactory for both to be managed under the one system. It was felt that the representatives of so wealthy a city as Rangoon should exercise wider powers than the Act conferred on them. For example, the Committee had not even power to authorise the establishment or removal of a slaughter-house or cattle-market without the sanction of the Deputy Commissioner, until Government exempted the Municipality from the appropriate section of the Act in 1892. It now had power to make byelaws, but

[1] *Our Monthly*, III. p. 512.

PLATE No. 29



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A STEAM TRAM.

these powers, especially in regard to sanitation and infectious diseases, were inadequate. Nor were relations between the Committee and its President very satisfactory. The Act of 1884 gave the Committee power to elect its own President, but as the President was still the executive officer of the Municipality a heavy burden of work was involved which deterred private persons from undertaking the office; it was hardly possible for anyone with a private business to manage to assume also the duties of municipal administration, and in practice the Deputy Commissioner therefore continued to be President. Thus in reality the Committee was deprived of the power of election, and in 1891 Government recognised this position by utilising its powers under the Act of 1884 to reserve the appointment of the President to itself. This circumstance made the position even more difficult; for the President was the executive officer of the Committee which thus had in effect no authority over its principal official. Morever, the dual position of the President who as Deputy Commissioner exercised supervisory powers in municipal matters under the Act of 1884, was naturally a source of friction. In his report for the year 1892-93 Major R. C. Temple, then President, wrote that "continuous endeavours were made throughout the year, as in previous years, to create a breach between the members of the Municipal Committee and the official President, and advantage was taken of any expression of difference of opinion between him and any particular member to attempt to widen any breach that might have been observed."

There were difficulties, too, with the Port Trust, which had come into existence in 1880. It was protested in 1883 that "The Port Trust Commissioners are not to be regarded in the light of possible adversaries: their opposition is strong and widespread. They interfere with the level of our drainage system which passes through the Strand bank; they stop our roads to the river, like China Street and Brooking Street; they put up a fence so as to hand the bottom of China Street bodily over to a private company for no conceivable purpose, there being abundance of other land; and far from assisting us we have had to go to law with them." The further absurdity was experienced that "Major Poole as President of the Municipality charged himself and others as Port Trust Commissioners with nuisance, and tried the case himself as Deputy Commissioner of the Rangoon Town District."

The educational management of the Committee also appears to have led to trouble, for in 1888 the municipal schools were transferred to the Educational Syndicate,[1] and in 1889 all control of educational administration was remitted to the Director of Public Instruction, the members of the Committee frankly stating that "they had neither the time nor the knowledge necessary to enable them to carry on the management with satisfaction to themselves or profit to Education": thus no doubt displaying the "good sense" which Government

[1] The Educational Syndicate was a body constituted in 1881 for the management of examinations and for the administration of certain branches of educational work. In 1884 a Collegiate branch was opened at the Government High School, affiliated to the Calcutta University, and in 1885 the School and the Collegiate section, known as the Rangoon College, were transferred to the Syndicate's control.

had attributed to them in their administration of this branch of public affairs. It is significant that in 1891 of a total of over 37,000 children under the age of fifteen years, only 5,325 were undergoing instruction. The Committee continued, however, to make a financial contribution of, in the year 1889-90, Rs. 55,000, for educational purposes.

The Municipal Committee found that its financial troubles persisted. Thus in 1888 the courts ruled that house-owners were not liable for taxes payable by occupants, and since in the coolie-barracks which let rooms by the day there was no occupier who could be properly assessed for a quarter's taxes, the municipal fund incurred a heavy loss. This situation was remedied by legislation; but deficiencies were discovered in the same year in the revenue department to the extent of over Rs. 14,000 and the Akunwun was required to resign, two clerks were dismissed, and four revenue thugyis were removed, while one thugyi absconded.

Whatever the deficiencies of the municipal administration, Rangoon as a commercial centre continued to flourish. Stimulus was given to commerce in this period by the annexation of Upper Burma. The extension of trade and consequently of political control into Upper Burma was no new project. As early as the year 1867, when Colonel Fytche had negotiated the commercial treaty of that year with King Mindon, the Government of India had suggested the inclusion of an article to the effect that "The Burmese ruler engages not to enter into negotiation or communication of any kind with any foreign power, except with the consent, previously obtained, of the British ruler"; but Fytche was of opinion that any attempt to establish suzerainty would not only fail but would jeopardise the whole of his negotiations, and the proposal was therefore dropped. With the deterioration of relations after the accession of King Thibaw, however, the suggestion that political control over Upper Burma should be enforced was revived, and the English merchants of Rangoon played a considerable part in an agitation to this end. As early as 1879 the Rangoon Chamber of Commerce drew the attention of the Chief Commissioner to the acute difficulties under which, it was stated, commerce with Upper Burma was labouring, and similar representations were made in subsequent years. The Chief Commissioner of the early 1880's, Sir Charles Bernard, was, however, averse to intervention and for the time being his influence prevailed. But in 1884 a public meeting of the inhabitants of Rangoon was convened in the Town Hall at which it was resolved to press upon Government the necessity of annexing Upper Burma. The minutes of this meeting stated that there was present on this occasion "an immense concourse of Burmese, Europeans, Chinese, and Natives of India", who unanimously passed the proposal; but a local newspaper, the *British Burma News*, affirmed that "at this meeting not so many as five persons of position among the Burmese, Chinese or foreign community" were present, apart from the English

[1] *The Commercial Treaty of 1862.*

inhabitants; and according to a report by the Chief Commissioner the Burmese members of the Municipal Committee convened a meeting of their own at which the Burmese elders resolved that they were concerned only with the welfare and prosperity of Lower Burma, and that "they could not interfere with foreign affairs". The Chamber of Commerce, however, supported the resolutions of the public meeting, and drew attention to the falling off of trade and to the "increased spirit of lawlessness" in Lower Burma which, it was stated, had occurred since King Thibaw's accession. At the same time the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company complained that the numerous dacoities in Upper Burma had produced a feeling of insecurity among its employees which could be allayed only if some protection were afforded by Government. Again in 1885 the Chamber of Commerce stated that as a result of the falling off of trade with Upper Burma "the position of the trading classes in Rangoon daily becomes more hopeless. Failures in the bazaar are almost daily occurrences;....credit is almost at an end, and there is no prospect of better times for the mercantile classes until an end has been put to the disorder in Upper Burma." The imposition of monopolies in Upper Burma, in contravention, it was held, of the commercial treaty of 1867, was also a ground of protest. On the other hand, the Chief Commissioner pointed out that the average of trade with Upper Burma from 1880 to 1884 was in fact somewhat greater than in the four years prior to King Thibaw's accession: and that though in respect of piece goods, which formed the major commodity imported through Rangoon, there had been a decline in the year 1884-85, this was due to the failure of the rice-crop in Upper Burma, in consequence of which the export of rice from Lower to Upper Burma had increased during the first six months of the year by over twenty-nine lakhs of rupees, while inevitably the power of the people of Upper Burma to purchase other commodities was proportionately reduced.

The agitation continued, nevertheless, and Chambers of Commerce in Great Britain were circularised by the Rangoon Chamber with the request, which was acceded to, to bring pressure to bear on the imperial government to interfere in the affairs of Upper Burma. Petitions were submitted to the Secretary of State from the Chambers of Commerce of Macclesfield, Glasgow, Manchester, London, and Liverpool: and when the threat of French intervention in Upper Burma seemed likely to materialise, the Rangoon Chamber of Commerce again made protests to the Chief Commissioner urging annexation, and the London Chamber of Commerce followed this example, as did the Glasgow Chamber, the Liverpool Chamber, and even the Salt Chamber of Commerce, Northwich. Private firms also sent in similar petitions. As the Chief Commissioner observed, "for some years back British merchants and other Englishmen in Lower Burma have desired to see Ava annexed, and to have a strong homogeneous British province stretching from the sea to the confines of China. It has been thought that such annexation would promote trade and also improve the prosperity of the people by securing the

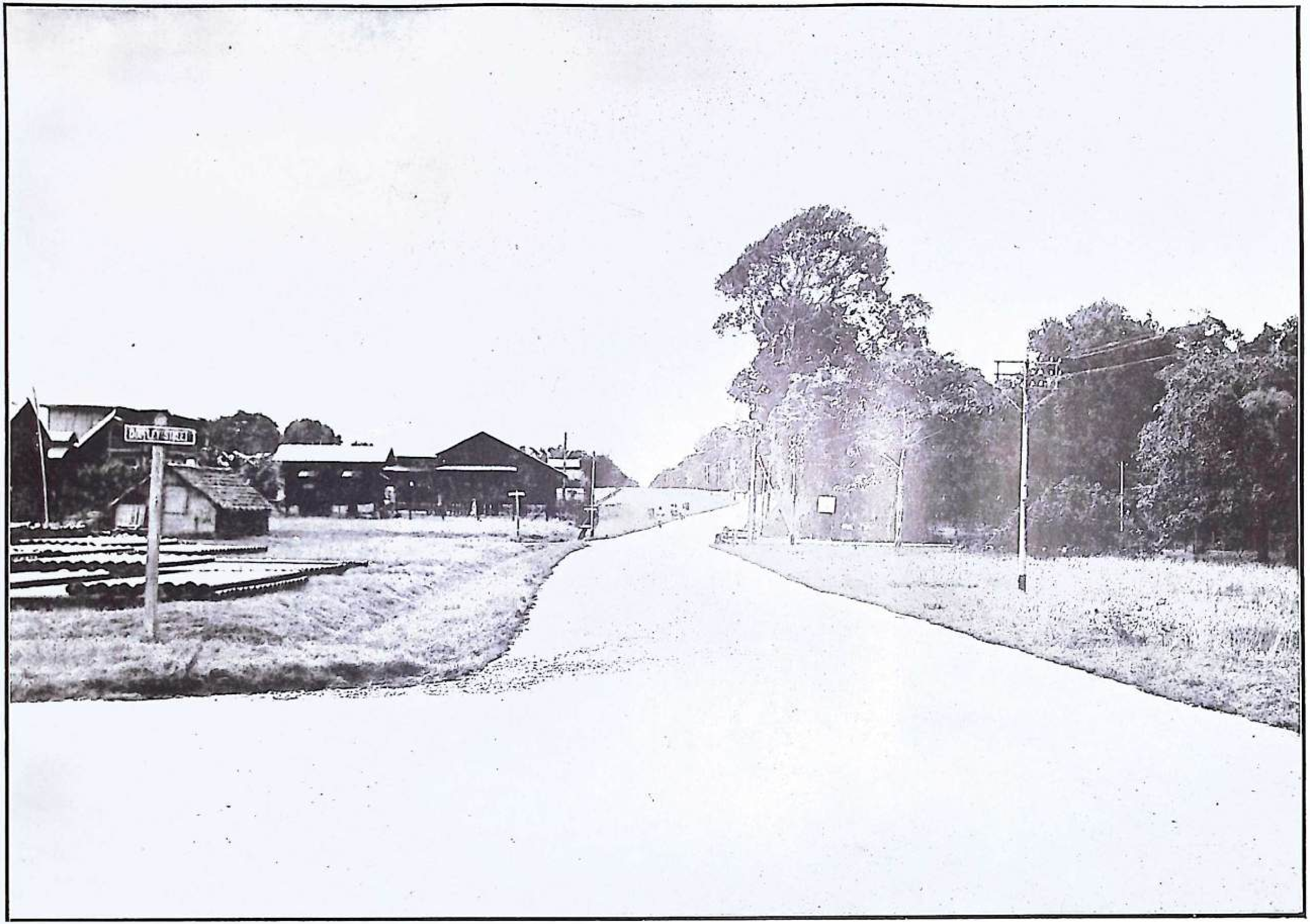
exploitation of the coal, teak, earth oil, and other valuable products of Ava, and by opening a direct route for trade with the western provinces of China." There can be little doubt that the pressure brought to bear by the Rangoon Chamber of Commerce and its corresponding bodies in Great Britain had a good deal to do with the willingness of the imperial government to bring Upper Burma under the British Crown[1].

The outbreak of the Third Anglo-Burmese War in 1885 did not directly affect Rangoon, except in so far as the generally disturbed condition of the country led to an increase of crime, and except that the Rangoon Volunteer Rifles, which had been formed in 1877 under the command of Major Evanson, saw a certain amount of active service. The mounted infantry detachment accompanied the expeditionary force to Mandalay, one company of infantry was sent into the Pegu district to assist in maintaining order, and the remainder of the corps performed guard duties in Rangoon in place of the regular forces.

The merchants of Rangoon were by no means disappointed in their hopeful anticipations of increased trade resulting from the annexation of Upper Burma which they had so strenuously demanded. In 1881-82 imports valued Rs. 505,00,000; at the end of the century their value was Rs. 913,00,000; exports in 1881-82 amounted to Rs. 473,00,000, and at the end of the century their value was Rs. 1354,00,000. Among imports textiles still ranked first, with cotton providing two-thirds of the total of textiles. Among exports, rice still predominated, with timber second, but mineral oil, the export of which had formerly been trivial, ranked third at the end of the century. The effect of the annexation of Upper Burma, which opened the petroleum wells to development, is here clearly perceived; and in general the annexation provided opportunities for commerce on a scale unknown before. The export of rice, which twenty years earlier was a matter of 302 lakhs of rupees, at the end of the century amounted to 959 lakhs; timber exports grew in the same period from 27 lakhs to 115 lakhs; petroleum and its products from 2½ to 57 lakhs; raw cotton from 23 to 29 lakhs; hides from 6 to 18 lakhs; spices from 2 to 8 lakhs. Similarly the imports of textiles had increased from 274 to 326 lakhs; of provisions from 14 to 84 lakhs; of machinery from 10 to 14 lakhs; of liquors from 13 to 26 lakhs; of coal from 8 to 22 lakhs[2].

The annexation and the consequently increased openings for trade had the effect of encouraging the establishment of new commercial undertakings and the extension of existing concerns. It was at this period, actually shortly before the annexation, in 1885, that Mr. John Halliday, formerly a partner in the firm of J. and G. Bulloch, took over certain mills which had been managed without much success by his brothers under the name of Halliday Brothers, and formed the Arracan Company to develop them; not till 1915 did this concern develop into Ellerman's Arracan Rice and Trading Company, when

[1] *Correspondence relating to Burmah* (C. 4614, 1886).
[2] Figures for 1878-79 and 1899-1900.



TIGER ALLEY, 1938

Sir John Ellerman bought the bulk of the shares. Also in 1885 the firm of Oppenheimer & Co. was founded. In 1886 Messrs. Foucar Bros., a timber firm originally established in Moulmein by Mr. Ferdinand Foucar in 1878, was extended to Rangoon, Mr. Emile Foucar being now in partnership with his brother. In the same year the firm of George Gillespie & Co., general merchants, was established; and also in that year Mr. D. S. Cargill developed his oil refinery at Dunneedaw into the Burmah Oil Company to work the now available oil-wells of Upper Burma, with Messrs. Finlay Fleming as managing agents. In 1885 a fresh development took place in the firm of Darwood; Mr. Goldenberg had retired in 1881 and had been succeeded as partner by Mr. John Macgregor, once in the employ of Messrs. Todd Findlay and latterly an assistant of Darwood and Goldenberg; and in 1885, the new partnership having been dissolved, Mr. Macgregor carried on the timber business as Macgregor & Co. In 1890 the firm of Harperink Smith was founded; and in the same year a name famous in the history of old Rangoon, Crisp, reappears. The original firm of Crisp had ceased to exist on the death of Captain May Flower Crisp in 1866; but in 1878 it was revived in Moulmein by one of his sons, Mr. A. B. Crisp, in conjunction with his nephew, E. T. Low. They were later joined by two other sons of Captain Crisp, M. F. Crisp, who had been in the employ of Messrs. Foucar at Moulmein, and Edmund Crisp, who had been employed by the Aga Syed Company. In 1890, Messrs. Crisp & Co., who dealt in timber and rice, extended their activities once more to Rangoon. In 1892 Messrs. J. A. Begbie & Co., general merchants, appeared; and in 1893 Messrs. Latham Black & Co. In 1897 Messrs. Steel first undertook the extraction of timber from Government forests, and in the same year Messrs. Foucar also obtained their first forest leases. It was not till 1907 that Messrs. Steel took advantage of the opportunities afforded by the Upper Burma oil-fields to form the Indo-Burma Petroleum Company.

The growth in the city's wealth is reflected in the establishment of new and flourishing retail concerns. In 1886 Captain P. Barnett, a retired officer of the Indian Army, opened the provision-dealer's establishment now known as Messrs. Barnett Bros; in 1888 Mr. Frank Watson opened a business on a modest scale in premises in Barr Street; in 1889 the firm of music-dealers, Messrs. Misquith, instituted their branch in the city; in 1892 Messrs. Whiteaway, Laidlaw & Co. opened their Rangoon branch; in 1894 Messrs. Rowe & Co. found it necessary to take new premises, and moved to the west side of Fytche Square where they remained until they entered into occupation of their present building in 1910; towards the end of the century the Madras firm of jewellers, Messrs. P. Orr & Sons, opened a branch in Fytche Square, removing, when the site was needed a year later for a new Chief Court Building, to newly-built premises in Sule Pagoda Road.

Banking also flourished; the National Bank of India opened its Rangoon branch in 1885, and the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation opened a branch, in Shafraz Road, in 1888.

Shipping developed proportionately. In the year 1881-82 the number of ships entering the harbour from foreign countries was 452, with a total tonnage of 404,780 tons; at the end of the century, although the number of foreign-bound vessels was less, being 303, the size of ships had increased so that the total foreign tonnage was 841,102 tons. It was natural that these circumstances should attract to the port regular shipping-lines which had not formerly been known; and thus in 1891 the Liverpool shipping-firm of Messrs. Bibby Bros., who had had connections with the East since 1821, began regular services to Burma. The vessels which Messrs. Bibby brought into these services were from the first all steam-propelled, for the sailing ship had almost disappeared from the foreign trade of Rangoon and in the last year of the century only one foreign-bound sailing vessel entered the port; whereas twenty years earlier the shipping had been equally divided between sail and steam.

Commerce in Rangoon continued to be largely in foreign hands. Thus in 1889 the Netherlands Trading Society, a Dutch firm which had operated in the Netherlands Indies since 1824, opened its Rangoon branch; and the German firms had, it was said, "a preponderating influence" in commercial life[1].

One curious foreign enterprise in this period was the foundation of a French Chamber of Commerce in Rangoon; shortly before the annexation of Upper Burma the French Consul, in the endeavour to promote the influence of his country, founded this institution which, however, achieved little success—there being only three members—the Consul himself; M. Goze, a Frenchman who was for some years Librarian of the Rangoon Literary Society; and a third person who held a very minor position in the commercial world[2].

Public amusements flourished to a degree unknown in earlier years. In 1887 the irregular race-meetings which had formerly been held on the *maidan* were succeeded by regularly organised racing; and though for a year or two at the end of the century racing curiously languished, by 1900 it had been revived under the rules of the Calcutta Turf Club. To provide better facilities, the section of Simpson Road which ran across the *maidan* was closed, and a new road, known as Lawfurd Road after the officer commanding the Cantonments at the time, was established near the northern verge of the *maidan*. The Burma Athletic Association originated also in the '90's. In 1894 at the British India Hotel, which stood in Sule Pagoda Road on the site later occupied by Messrs. P. Orr & Sons, a public meeting was held which agreed to inaugurate league football. There was some degree of difficulty within the first few weeks of the league's formation and the Gymkhana Club withdrew; but a new secretary was then elected and the league was resumed. Games were played on the grounds of the member-clubs until in 1897 permission was granted for the use of the *maidan*. In 1895 the association

[1] Nisbet: *Burma under British Rule and Before,* 1.452.
[2] *Burma British Association Quarterly Bulletin,* October 1938.

adopted the name of The Burma Association Football League; but in 1898 it added cricket to its activities, and in 1899 the present title of the Burma Athletic Association was brought into use.

Throughout this period the city's population continued to increase; the Census of 1881 had given a return of 134,176; that of 1891 gave a return of 180,324; while in 1901 the population had grown to 248,060[1].

This increasing population presented the administration with many problems. The water-supply question remained to be satisfactorily solved. Before the elective Committee took charge in 1882 the project for a large reservoir at Kokine had already been adopted; and in 1884 the new supply was laid on to the town, the water being taken from the Victoria Lake, as the reservoir was named, to the Royal Lakes, which, the water-level having been raised three feet by the necessary *bunds*, became the service reservoir for Rangoon. The new water-supply was reported in 1885 to be "pure and abundant"; but it was available for only a limited area. The mains were constructed only in the town proper from Morton Street to Judah Ezekiel Street, and in Pazundaung, while the rest of Rangoon, including the Dalla quarter across the River, still depended on wells or, in the case of Dalla, tanks, which were often polluted. However, the water problem having been, so it was hoped, solved for many years to come, the Municipal Engineer proposed to introduce a proper sewage system, and on the 11th November 1887 a contract was signed with Messrs. Shone & Ault for the installation of their Hydro-Pneumatic system. This system, which cost thirty-one lakhs to install, was applied only to the area between 2nd Street and Judah Ezekiel Street from the Strand to Canal and Fraser Streets, plus Montgomerie Street from Mogul Street to Sparks Street, for in areas where there was no effective water-supply the system was useless. The sewage outfall was placed at Monkey Point. The new sewage works were formally opened on the 23rd December 1889 by H. R. H. Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence. A year later the system was extended to Ahlone, Pazundaung, and Theinbyu, and in 1896-97 to Lanmadaw; but no house-connections were made in these quarters, the sulliage being carried to sewage depots by carts. Elsewhere

[1] *Census Returns.*

	1881	1891	1901
1. Burmese	64,948	68,319	77,825
2. Karens	171	2,455	848
3. Other indigenous races	1,890	2,532	3,013
4. Total of 1—3	67,009	73,306	81,686
5. Hindus	44,908	58,280	77,444
6. Muslims	21,169	29,207	41,846
7. Total of 5—6	66,077	87,487	119,290
8. Chinese	3,752	7,576	11,018
9. Europeans	2,856	4,120	3,805
10. Anglo-Indians	1,487	3,711	4,674
11. Armenians	55	164	191
12. Jews	172	219	508
13. Total Population	134,176	180,324	248,060

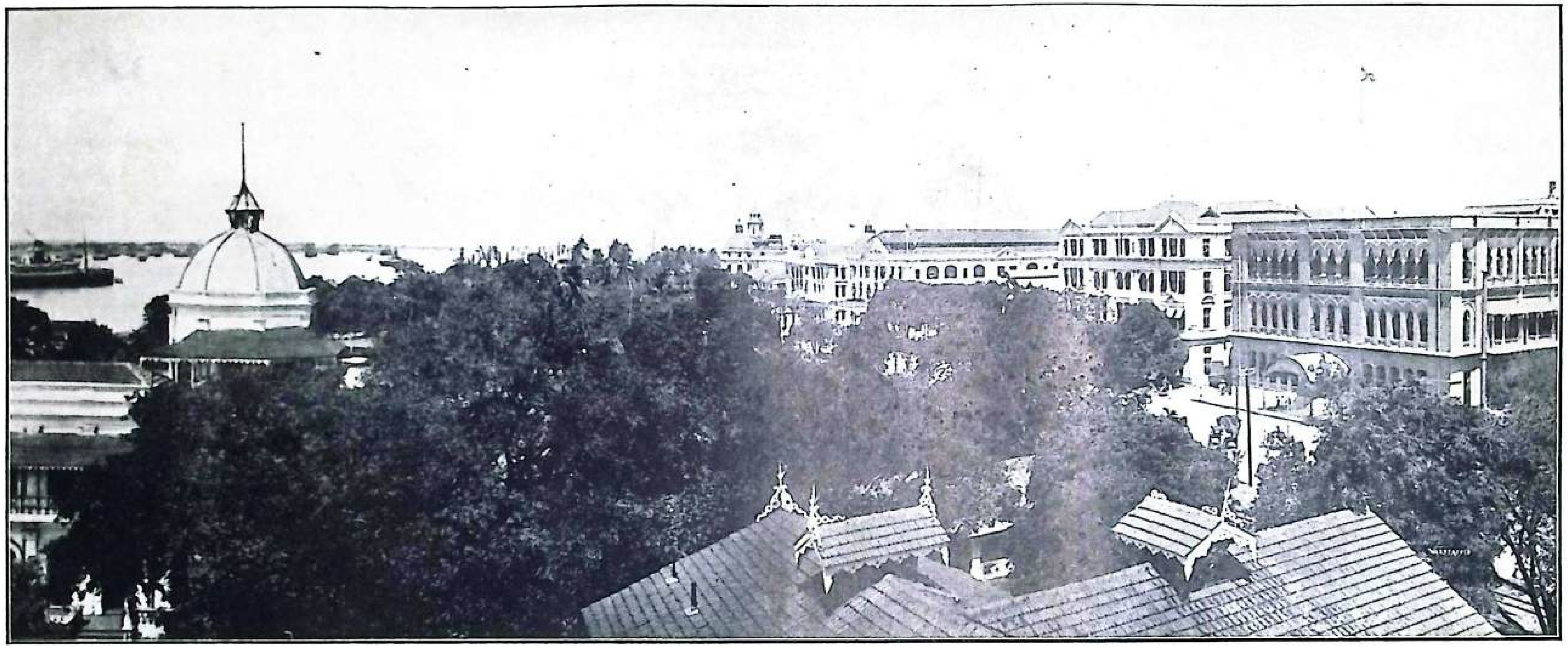
the old system was continued. There was at first some reluctance on the part of house-holders to connect their houses with the system, and by 1891 only ten per cent of the possible buildings were connected; in that year, therefore, powers were conferred on the Municipal Committee by legislation to compel the adoption of the system. In the same year the system was connected with all Government buildings in the town.

The problems of sanitation were by no means wholly solved by the introduction of these measures. The surface drains were still unsatisfactory, for outside the centre of the city many of the houses were built below the level of the roads, which had been constructed on embankments, and the drainage thus accumulated beneath the buildings. The newer houses were usually built with effective drains, but many of the older houses were above "horribly foul" land[1]. The habits of some sections of the population left a good deal to be desired, moreover; but the only way of enforcing byelaws of hygiene was by police action, and not only was there for a time some doubt of the legality of the byelaws, but also the police were reluctant to act in such matters. After 1882 the police were no longer under the control of the Municipal Committee, and it was difficult to persuade them to do their duty. The *Annual Reports on the Municipal Administration of Rangoon* refer year by year to the difficulty. "Since the police management has been taken away from the municipality, the byelaws have become deadletters and nuisances are utterly unchecked," it was complained in the *Report* for 1882-83; and it would indeed appear that the police were expressly directed to take no action in the matter, for the following annual *Report* states that "the orders recently given to the Police, to abstain from interfering in such trifling matters, have, in Rangoon, been carried out to the letter; they do absolutely nothing for the preservation of public health". Captain Adamson, who was President from January 1884 to December 1885, endeavoured to improve matters; "All sorts of nuisances were entirely unchecked by the Police", he wrote in his *Report*, "and the streets, lanes, and vacant places in the town were in consequence in a filthy state. Seeing the result of this inaction on the part of the Police, I, as Deputy Commissioner, at once gave orders to the Police to arrest all persons found committing nuisances under the Police Act. The result was most satisfactory, and the cleanliness of the town has improved wonderfully." His optimism was not justified, however, for the following year he wrote that the police were still remiss in these matters: "I have heard Police officers say 'What is the use of arresting a man if he is only fined a Rupee' and they seem to think that their time has been wasted in prosecuting such petty cases", he reported, and the complaints in the *Annual Reports* of the Municipality continued for many years.

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[1] *Annual Report on the Working of the Rangoon Municipality*, 1884-85.

PLATE No. 31



By permission of J. W. Darwood, Esq.

THE STRAND, 1920.

It was considered that the immigrant Indian population was largely responsible for these unhygienic acts. The problem of the immigrant continued to cause increasing anxiety. The population of Rangoon was still changing rapidly in character, and the town was becoming increasingly Indianised. In 1881 there were still more Burmans than Indians in the town, there being 67,000 of the former as against 66,000 of the latter, or 50% as against 49% of the whole population. In 1891, of the total population of 180,324, only about 40% were Burmans, while 48% were Indians, there being 73,000 Burmans as against 87,000 Indians. In 1901 of the total population of 248,060, the Burmans constituted 81,000 or 33%, and the Indians 119,000 or 48%. Thus although the Burmese population was not actually decreasing, it was relatively diminishing with rapidity while the Indian population was increasing enormously. In addition to the Indian permanently resident in Rangoon and the coolie employed by the rice and timber firms or by the port, there was the agricultural labourer who came to Burma for two or three seasons and passed through Rangoon on his arrival and departure. After 1886, when the Kingdom of Burma finally fell, the rice industry of Upper Burma developed, and many Burmese families who had removed to Lower Burma returned to the upper province; thus more Indian labour was needed in the Delta. At the same time the area of cultivation in the Delta continued to increase, growing from about 2,860,000 acres in 1882-83 to about 6,648,000 acres in 1892-93. The development of immigration is indicated by the following statement showing the number of immigrants who entered Rangoon and the number of emigrants who left in the later 1880's:

	Immigrants	Emigrants
1885	51,871	48,316
1886	74,280	50,966
1887	87,441	49,858
1888	81,648	61,902
1889	87,786	65,586

There was thus a continued excess of immigrants over emigrants, which, with the natural increase, explains the changing nature of the population of Rangoon.

The problem of overcrowding which had begun to engage the attention of the nominated Municipal Committee in its later years inevitably occupied a good deal of the attention of the new administration. The Health Officer pointed out in 1882-83 that "the worst cases are about a hundred houses used as barracks; their occupants are Madras coolies. The houses do not really come under the legal definition of lodging-house and therefore are unaffected by those byelaws." It was, he considered, "imperatively necessary that these barracks and the large number of dwelling-houses used as lodging-houses by a large floating population" should be brought under

proper supervision and control, the more so as these places were now being found "in some of the best streets of the town, where they cause depreciation of property and are the *foci* of disease and filth of the neighbourhood". He complained that "the health of the city is at all times of the year threatened by the arrival of thousands of coolies by the steamers from the Madras coast. On arrival the coolies are crowded in places unsuited to their reception and should sickness break out the consequences might be most disastrous." The condition of these unfortunate people was utterly miserable; "they frequently arrive in Rangoon without the means of paying their passage-money, when their services are virtually sold by auction to any person who will release them from their obligations." As the President of the Municipal Committee noted, there was a suspicion that something "resembling a slave trade" was growing up[1].

Again in his report for the following year the Health Officer emphasised the necessity for some reform of the housing conditions of these people. "The matter", he observed, "has been utterly neglected in the past, and it is difficult to make satisfactory progress against the evils arising from a long established custom, the perpetuation of which is to the pecuniary interest of a large number of people." There was, indeed, strong opposition to any proposal to enforce suitable regulation of the lodging-houses. "Many owners of the most dilapidated dwellings in the town," it was said, "collect enormous rents from these people."[2] Nor was much help to be obtained from the courts. Rules had been made by the Municipal Committee in 1882 requiring all lodging-houses to be registered, but no restriction had been placed upon the number of occupants of such establishments; thus in practice the only byelaws affecting them were those prohibiting the keeping of unlicensed lodging-houses, and even these could not be enforced, for although in one or two cases the Assistant Magistrate gave decisions against keepers of unlicensed lodgings, in a large number of cases which came before the Honorary Magistrates the charge was dismissed, the court saying that "if this law were to be enforced, half the native houses in Rangoon would have to be licensed."[3] Thus even the law requiring registration of lodging-houses was made a dead letter. Equally it was impossible to enforce any regulations relating to sanitation. The Burma Municipal Act of 1884, however, extended the powers of the Committee to make byelaws affecting lodging-houses and in July 1885 the Committee made certain lodging-house rules; but these, like the old rules, failed to prescribe a minimum floor-space per occupant, and instead authorised the Committee itself to fix the number of occupants of each individual building on the report of the inspecting officer. Thus when an attempt was made to utilise these powers against owners of overcrowded buildings, there was a great outcry amongst the wealthy Burmans and Europeans to whom these "overcrowded coolie-barracks have hitherto been

[1] *Annual Report on the Working of the Rangoon Municipality*, 1882-83.
[2] *ibid.* 1883-84.
[3] *ibid.*

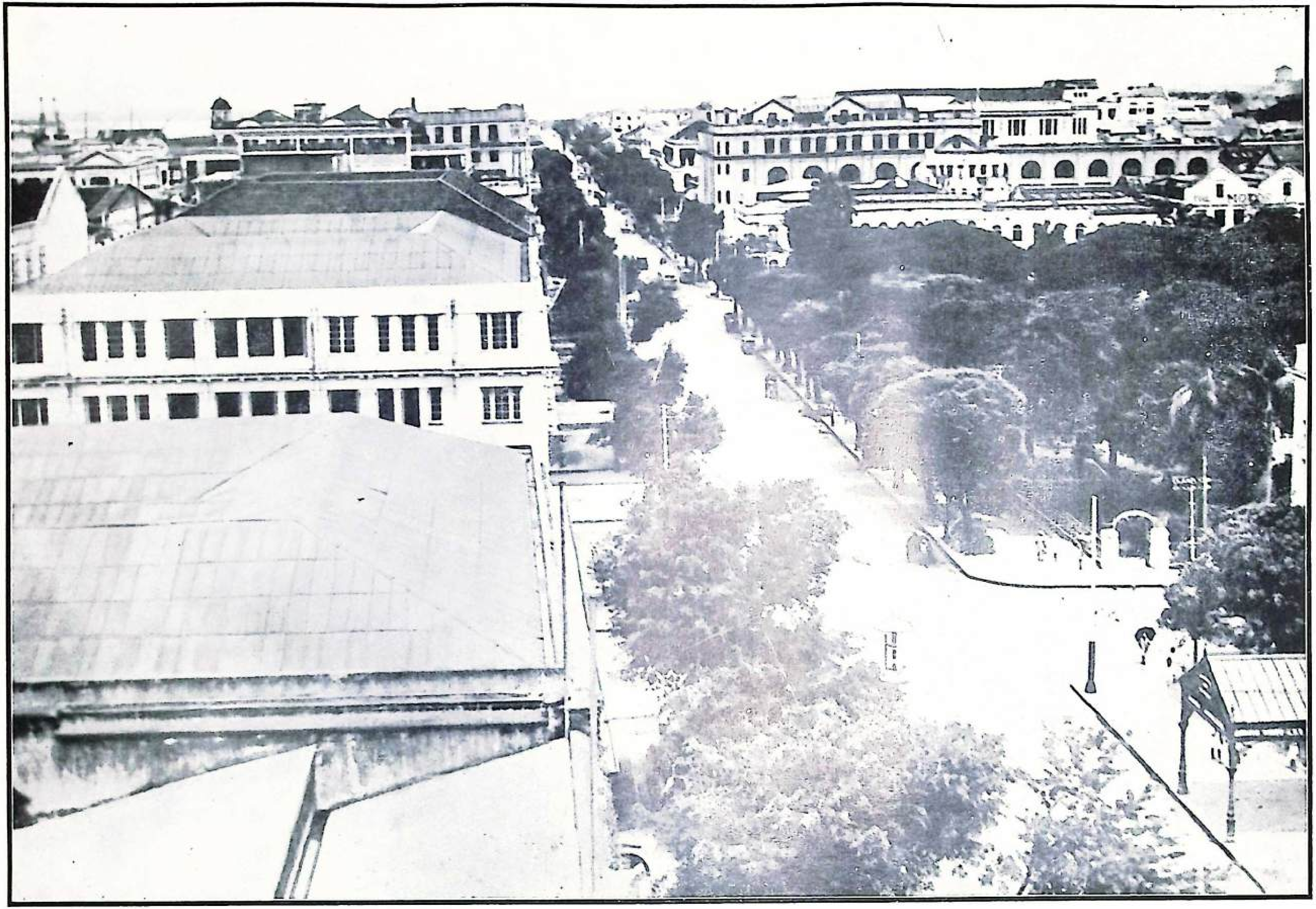
a lucrative investment," and when a new Committee came into office in 1886 a resolution was passed that even these feeble rules should be modified. The Chief Commissioner, however, exercised his power of veto and directed that the rules be given a fair trial. The Health Officer then instituted proceedings against no less than ninety-three owners and was successful in each case, both in the Lower Court and in the Recorder's Court on appeal. The byelaws were still defective, but again the influence of owners and their representatives on the Committee was sufficient to prevent any amendment, until in 1891 new rules were at last passed which, it was hoped, would "prevent wealthy owners of what the Chief Commissioner has declared to be the pest-houses of Rangoon from any longer fattening on the ignorance of the poor whom they profess to suitably lodge, from spreading death and disease through the town, and from throwing discredit (perhaps not altogether undeserved) on the Committee"[1]. These rules prescribed a minimum floor-space of twenty-four square feet per person, and required the owner of the building to keep the premises clean, to have all refuse removed by 10 a.m. each day, to provide proper ventilation, to provide suitable cooking and washing accommodation, to report cases of disease to the Health Officer and to allow access to the building to the Health Officer and his staff. Many prosecutions were made under the new rules, which came into force in November 1891, though it was still complained that the leniency of the Magistrates was an obstacle. The Health Officer, moreover, found that his staff was inadequate for the duty of inspecting lodging-houses as well as carrying on the duties of his department in connection with infectious diseases. There were, in his view, "some habitual offenders against Municipal regulations, persons of ample means and in good position in the community to which they belong, and it will be necessary to make an example of them"; but though in one year alone, 1892-93, there were 226 prosecutions for breaches of the lodging-house rules, and fines aggregating Rs. 2,068 were imposed, the shortage of staff and the leniency of the Magistrates continued to be a ground of complaint[2].

The presence of the large Indian population had also the effect of introducing into Rangoon a new element of civil disturbance, communal rioting. In June 1893, on the occasion of Bakr'id, a party of Muslims insisted on killing a cow outside the Hindu temple in 29th Street, despite a prohibition by a magistrate. In the riot which followed, it became necessary for the military police to fire on the mob, and some loss of life was caused; the troops were summoned from the barracks on Pagoda Hill, but by the time they arrived all was quiet. For some years afterwards troops were posted in the town at Bakr'id, but their services were not in fact required.

The unhealthiness of the town was accentuated by the growth of insanitary settlements on unreclaimed land in the suburbs. The rapid increase of population was responsible for this state of affairs also. The Pazundaung quarter was notorious for its unhealthiness, but other quarters were almost as bad.

[1] *ibid.* 1890-91.
[2] *ibid.* 1891-92.

In 1884 the *Municipal Report* stated that there was much malaria in Pazundaung as a result of the marshy nature of the whole district and the existence of tidal creeks which ran through and beyond the premises of the firms who had mills along the Creek. "The houses, most of them of bamboo, are built over the broad shallow trenches by the roadside, and on the adjoining low ground, the tidal water runs under all the houses, but the mud is exposed for 22 hours out of the 24, there are no latrines or attempt at conservancy possible, and pigs abound in numbers. The stench from the putrid mud beneath the houses is at times unbearable". Some improvement was introduced by the extension of the system of conservancy by carts in connection with the sewage works to this area where "the houses are, most of them, in swamps which had become saturated with years of filth of every description"; but both there and in quarters nearer the town conditions remained unsatisfactory. Lanmadaw on the west, Botataung on the east, Theinbyu and Tamway in the north-east, were thoroughly unhealthy, and, as was pointed out in the *Municipal Report* for 1888-89, in these areas "thousands of people are living over filthy swamps and nullas amidst low-lying paddy fields". The reason for this state of affairs appears to be that despite the great increase in population little had been done in the 1870's and 1880's in the way of draining the land and raising levels. The town proper had nearly all been raised in the 1850's and 1860's, but in the succeeding twenty years reclamation work almost ceased, although as the population was increasing by tens of thousands each decade there was much overcrowding in the city, rents were high, and the poor were driven into the unhealthy suburbs described above. It was admitted as early as the middle 1880's that there was urgent need for the reclamation of land on both east and west which, if drained and raised, would be suitable for building sites, but the cost of such work was almost prohibitive. The work of reclamation had originally been met from the proceeds of sale and rent of town lands, and as long as there was plenty of land to be sold no financial difficulty was experienced; but as the sales continued, the land available dwindled, until by 1872 nearly all land of any value in central Rangoon had been disposed of, and so the policy of leasing was introduced to avoid the complete alienation of the public land within the town. Thus the only income received by the Land Sale and Rent Fund was the ground-rent paid by lease-holders, and this income, being insufficient for extensive works, became in effect merely a part of the normal revenues of the Municipality. In consequence of this suspension of activity, there continued to be within the municipal limits low-lying and unhealthy swamps. Moreover, after 1872 leases were granted for fifteen years at most, and generally for only five years, so that there was no inducement at all for private persons to undertake the reclamation of any land which they held, any more than there was for them to erect sound buildings on land suitable for pukka houses. The short-term lease policy thus acted as a severe handicap to the development of the city. These circumstances, together with the practice early adopted of permitting squatters to settle on unreclaimed land from which they might be ejected on



MERCHANT STREET, 1938

three months' notice, had produced the conditions from which such quarters as Pazundaung suffered.

Another contribution to the unhealthy condition of the city was the continuance of cultivation in the neighbourhood of the town; though by 1891 the cultivated area within municipal limits was only 1,431 acres, its condition can be judged from the issue in 1893 of a Government order prohibiting the use of night-soil and urine as manure in the Chinese gardens of the quarter between Upper Phayre Street, Stockade Road, Culvert Road, and Lake Road, and in the area between Upper Phayre Street, the Cantonment Boundary, and Dalhousie Park.

It is not surprising that under such conditions the rate of mortality in Rangoon was excessive. Such half-hearted measures as the introduction of a water-supply and a sewage-system that applied to only a fragment of the municipal area had very little beneficial effect on the death-rate. In the nine years preceding the inauguration of the new water-supply, that is, the years 1875 to 1883 inclusive, the average death-rate per thousand had been 28.07, the worst years being the cholera-stricken period of 1877 and 1878, though still "fevers" are reported as the cause of the majority of deaths. In the years 1884 to 1889, after the water supply had been introduced but before the sanitary system was working, deaths averaged 31.87 per thousand, the worst year being 1889 when there was a bad outbreak of small-pox. Actually small-pox, plague, and cholera, as well as dysentery and typhoid, were endemic in Rangoon, though worse in some years than others. In the succeeding ten years, 1890 to 1899, following the introduction of the sewage plant, the average of deaths was 33.75 per thousand. It would thus appear that the introduction of the new water supply and the new sanitary system had not had any beneficial effect at all on the public health, for the rate of deaths registered compares poorly with an average of 21.95 in the years before the Municipal Committee came into existence and with the average of 28.07 before the establishment of the new water-supply. The apparent progressive increase in the rate of deaths is, however, misleading: with improved methods of municipal government, registration was more strictly enforced, and the registered deaths of the earlier period do not, therefore, give a true basis of comparison. But whatever the rate of mortality may have been in earlier years, the average of 33. 75 deaths per thousand of population was much too high. The worst quarters in this respect were Lanmadaw, Theinbyu, and Pazundaung, where the death-rate was year after year between forty and fifty per thousand, although the average for the whole town was between thirty and forty[1].

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[1] The record of mortality compares with that of London in the worst periods of the eighteenth century when in the decade 1721-30 the death rate was 37.8 per mille. In 1935 the death-rate for the County of London was 11.4 per mille.

Although the urgent need for reclamation of these unhealthy areas was recognised, the amount spent on such work was quite inadequate. In the six years 1885-86 to 1890-91 only two lakhs were expended under this head, and not even one block of land was completely reclaimed during that period. The difficulty was to find the money, for it was not possible to finance capital works out of a municipal grant which was hardly sufficient for maintenance and repair of essential services. Such funds as were available were urgently needed for maintaining the roads, which were in a very bad condition, as is indicated by the fact that until it was metalled in 1893 Judah Ezekiel Street between Dalhousie and Montgomerie Streets was "in a low swampy state". Nothing was done, however, until in 1890 the reiterated complaints about the death rate induced the Chief Commissioner to appoint a committee to consider the whole subject of reclamation; and this Committee proposed a comprehensive scheme for East Rangoon involving the expenditure on the part of the Municipality of twenty lakhs of rupees. The Municipal Committee agreed to accept this liability, and to meet the cost it was at the same time agreed that all land in the town proper held under lease or by squatters should be sold outright as freehold property, and the proceeds devoted to reclamation work. Thus the original policy of the years before 1872 was reverted to. In addition to the work of reclamation, an improvement in communications in East Rangoon was determined on, and in the early 1890's a road, known as Stockade Road after the old Theinbyu or White House Stockade, was established, running northwards in continuation of Judah Ezekiel Street, crossing the railway by a bridge, and so providing a much-needed connection between the main portion of the town and the rapidly growing suburbs of the north-east which had been since 1877 cut off from the city by the railway line.

The reclamation work thus undertaken applied only, however, to East Rangoon between Montgomerie Street and the River, and did not affect the western fringe of the town or the north-east. The northern fringe formed the Cantonment area, and lay outside the jurisdiction of the Municipal Committee; and, moreover, occupying high-lying land, it was not unhealthy. Indeed, it was a source of complaint that most of the higher-lying land of Rangoon should be in the hands of the military and that thus hundreds of acres of good land lay vacant while scarcely a healthy building-site was available elsewhere[1]. The reclamation of north-eastern and western Rangoon, however, was as urgent a matter as the reclamation of the east. In the *Municipal Report* for the year 1897-98 it was stated that "Lanmadaw is the plague spot of Rangoon. Every year its position must become worse and worse. The soil is yearly becoming more impregnated with filth, and the danger is yearly becoming more pronounced. The condition of this quarter is a serious menace to the rest of the town. South Kemmendine cannot be

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[1] *ibid.* 1883-84.

reclaimed for some years to come, but portions of it are nearly as bad as Lanmadaw. Tamway, too, has numerous villages of the most insanitary description—low, and, in the rains, waterlogged and filthy. The same remarks apply to parts of Theinbyu". The land of Lanmadaw was still the property of Government, let to squatters and short-term lease-holders, but "this quarter is the filthiest and deadliest in Rangoon"[1]. Though the reclamation scheme did not affect Lanmadaw, the Municipal Committee expressed its readiness to undertake the reclamation of this area at a cost of ten lakhs: but an unexpected difficulty arose. So far the rents received by Government from sites within the Municipal limits had been credited to the Land Sale and Rent Fund and then remitted to the Municipality for use in public works; but in 1898 the Government of India resolved that these rents should cease to be paid to the Municipality, which therefore abandoned its proposed reclamation of Lanmadaw. Thus the work of reclamation suffered another set-back.

The growth of population had the effect of producing once more a shortage of water. The Kokine water scheme, inaugurated in 1884, was anticipated to meet the needs of the town for many years to come; but as early as six years later the supply had already become inadequate, and in the dry season of 1890 Rangoon was "dangerously near a water famine, which was only averted by the early setting in of the rains"[2]. Apart from the increase in population, which in the preceding decade grew from 134,000 to 180,000, the instalment of the new sanitary system imposed a heavy burden on the water-supply; and even so the supply had not been extended to all the suburbs. At Dawbong, beyond the Pazundaung Creek, there was no proper supply and water had to be obtained by the inhabitants from a hydrant erected on the Rangoon side of the Creek; the supply to Pazundaung was no longer adequate; Dalla continued to be served by unhygienic tanks; and Kemmendine was still served by wells. Moreover, the quality of the water was now far from good.

The problem of the water-supply had therefore to be taken into consideration once more. Experiments with filters were made in the hope of improving the quality of the water, but the results were not encouraging and it became apparent that the use of the Royal Lakes as a service-reservoir must be abandoned. A Committee appointed by the provincial government resolved to construct a new service-reservoir on the Pagoda Hill to which water should be pumped up from the main between the Victoria and Royal Lakes, so that the whole town might be supplied by gravitation, for there had been many complaints of low pressure in Pazundaung and in the higher buildings everywhere. But this measure was only palliative. It would, it was hoped, provide a constant supply; but this would in itself tend to a

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[1] *ibid.* 1898-99.
[2] *ibid.* 8189-90.

greater consumption since many buildings which had so far received only a partial and intermittent supply in the dry weather would now consume a constant amount. The Municipal Engineer proposed an extension of the Victoria Lake, but this would provide only for the period until 1908 by which date, it was estimated, the population would again have outgrown the supply. The shortage continued, despite the inauguration of the new reservoir on the Pagoda Hill in July 1894; and there was much argument about the remedy. Several schemes were suggested, such as an extension of the Victoria Lake on the east over the Kanbe area as the Municipal Engineer wanted, or a new reservoir at Thamaing, or a new one at Mingaladon; but these plans were ultimately rejected in favour of a more comprehensive scheme, and it was resolved to construct a reservoir at Hlawga.

A better water-supply was needed by the fire brigade. The Municipal Committee established a permanent brigade in 1883, supplemented by a reorganised volunteer brigade. In the same year horses capable of pulling the new steam-engines were obtained and the method of traction by manual-labour was eliminated. Volunteer fire brigades were formed at St. John's and St. Paul's Schools and the work of the school boys was highly praised by the Municipality. A new fire station was built in Dalhousie Street in 1884, and the steam-engines, formerly kept at the Strand Bazaar, were removed to it. Serious fires continued, however, and the damage to property is indicated by by the following figures:—

1885—86	Rs. 2,89,445
1886—87	Rs. 8,23,535
1887—88	Rs. 6,95,305
1888—89	Rs. 5,20,110
1889—90	Rs. 1,70,000
1890—91	Rs. 1,81,931
1891—92	Rs. 3,26,490
1892—93	Rs. 1,43,325
1893—94	Rs. 1,87,290
1894—95	Rs. 1,18,950
1895—96	Rs. 1,80,580
1896—97	Rs. 5,62,580
1897—88	Rs. 85,830

The greater part of these fires occurred in the outlying quarters where the buildings were constructed of highly inflammable materials and where the water supply was least effective; within the town proper the better supply of water and the replacement, especially in the 1890's, of timber houses by masonry buildings, reduced the liability of serious outbreaks. In 1896 the volunteer brigade was abolished, for Rangoon had now outgrown so primitive a system, useful as it had been in the past, and the paid brigade was increased in strength in compensation.



THE SULE PAGODA, 1938

Rangoon was, indeed, a rapidly growing and changing city. The 1870's, 1880's and 1890's saw much development of public buildings, a development which reflects the growth of Burma and therefore of Rangoon in commerce and prosperity. New Law Courts were begun in 1875 on the Strand, where the old Public Offices stood and where the new Police Courts now are. In the same year the Presbyterian Church was opened on Signal Pagoda Road, a building towards the cost of which Government contributed £600 on condition that one hundred and fifty seats were reserved for the use of troops; Government also made a monthly grant to the minister in consideration of his services among the soldiers. A new Post and Telegraph building was erected on the Strand on the site of the Treasury and Deputy Commissioner's office, the old Post Office building continuing in use as the Government Press. In 1878 the Mayo Home for Sailors, named in honour of the late Viceroy, was opened near the River opposite Brooking Street. In 1882 the Bernard Free Library, so called in honour of the Chief Commissioner of the time, was opened in Commissioner Road. In 1885 the Muncipal Committee purchased for one lakh of rupees a building known as Ripon Hall on the north side of Fytche Square, for use as a municipal office, selling the Shafraz Road Office for Rs. 34,000. The building thus acquired was old and in poor condition, but was capable of a few years' service. The new office, known as the Town Hall, was taken into use on the 19th November 1886. In 1887 the Dufferin Hospital was opened, several municipalities displaying their interest in its work by establishing scholarships tenable thereat. In 1890 a new Secretariat building was commenced, for with the annexation of Upper Burma the Secretariat had expanded considerably and the accommodation in the old building was no longer adequate. The new building, which consisted originally of only one block, erected on the north side of Dalhousie Street between Sparks Street and Judah Ezekiel Street, was completed in 1893; and two years later the east and west wings were commenced, these being completed in 1905. The total cost of the whole Secretariat building was Rs. 25,00,000. A new Anglican Cathedral was built in the same period; in 1890-91 the old Town Church by the River was demolished and the site sold, work was commenced on the new Cathedral within the compound of the Diocesan Schools, and the building was brought into use on the 18th November 1894, Mr. Hoyne-Fox being the architect. The old Assembly Rooms which were by now in a decrepit condition were replaced by the Jubilee Hall; as early as 1893 the Municipal Committee resolved that the approaching Diamond Jubilee of the Queen-Empress should be celebrated by the erection of a new public hall on the Assembly Rooms site, and in December 1898 on the completion of the building the Hall was handed over to the Municipality by the Jubilee Hall Committee which had been responsible for the work. In 1892 a new Government House was commenced. As early as 1872 it had been found that the old timber Government House was too small, and a wooden building near by had been purchased

as an annexe for guests. Now a pukka building was erected in place of the old timber one, and was completed in 1895 at a cost of Rs. 7,17,000. This "imposing and luxurious but hardly beautiful structure," as one of its occupants describes it,[1] was affirmed by its architect, Mr. Hoyne-Fox, A.R.I.B.A., to be "in the Queen Anne Renaissance style"[2], but unkind critics have been known to suggest that a more apt description would be "the Later Hydropathic style."

Indeed, while these new buildings were doubtless excellent from a utilitarian point of view, it is open to doubt whether sufficient attention was paid to aesthetic considerations. Some comment was made in the public press in this regard. It was suggested that "the only creditable building there is in Rangoon is the new Post and Telegraph office", and of the rest the Court Building came in for special condemnation, for, it was said, it "was probably designed by a pardoned convict who himself never forgave his judge". It was further suggested that one of the dynamitards who were causing so much concern in London in those days might be induced by offer of a free pardon to come to Rangoon to practise his art there[3]. Moreover, though the new public buildings may have been well built, private building for many years made little progress. The short-term lease policy was a deterrent to expensive building, and the houses erected in this period were mainly of plank and iron, ugly and flimsy[4]. It was only in the town proper, where the land was freehold, that masonry buildings of good type replaced the earlier timber structures.

Rangoon made some progress in means of locomotion in these years. Horse-drawn vehicles were the only means of transport until the 1880's, but on the 4th March of the year 1884—the same year as the Telephone Company established itself in Rangoon—the first tramway in Rangoon was opened by Messrs. J. W. Darwood, who ran a steam tram on a line from the Strand up China Street and Pagoda Road to the Shwe Dagon. A year later another line was run from China Street westwards along Dalhousie Street to the junction of that street with the Strand Road; and eastwards from China Street along Dalhousie Street, up Sule Pagoda Road, and along Montgomerie Street to Pazundaung; while in 1886 the western line was extended to Williams Street and a further line was established from the Sule Pagoda along Dalhousie Street and down Judah Ezekiel Street to the Strand. In 1887 the western line was extended as far as College Street. The tramway was tenant of the municipality and paid a rental of Rs. 3,000 a mile in respect of its double tracks and Rs. 2,000 a mile for the single tracks, paying in all Rs. 13,000 a year. In 1889 the undertaking was sold to the Steam Tramway Company of Calcutta, with Messrs. Gillanders Arbuthnot as agents[5].

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[1] Thirkell White: *A Civil Servant in Burma*, pp. 12. sqq.

[2] *Annual Report on the Administration of Burma*, 1892-93.

[3] *Our Monthly*, III. p. 578.

[4] *Annual Report on the Working of the Rangoon Municipality*, 1884-85.

[5] See Plate No. 29 — A Steam Tram.

Another innovation was the rickshaw which was introduced in 1893. The *Municipal Report* for 1893-94 records that "The Committee during the year framed rules for regulating jinrickshaws. It was expected that jinrickshaws would be introduced into Rangoon and a feeble effort to do so was made, but the rules have not been required and not more than half a dozen vehicles of this description are in Rangoon now. The fact that prostitutes were the principal patronizers of jinrickshaws when they were introduced may have had more than anything else to do with the want of support accorded them by the general public. A Chinaman offered to start some if he were granted the sole right of plying such conveyances for a term of years, but, of course, such a proposal could not be entertained". Another innovation was the hand cart; in the same year, 1893-94, the Municipal Committee noted that rules were required for the licensing of these vehicles which "are quite a new institution in Rangoon, such things being unknown here two years ago".

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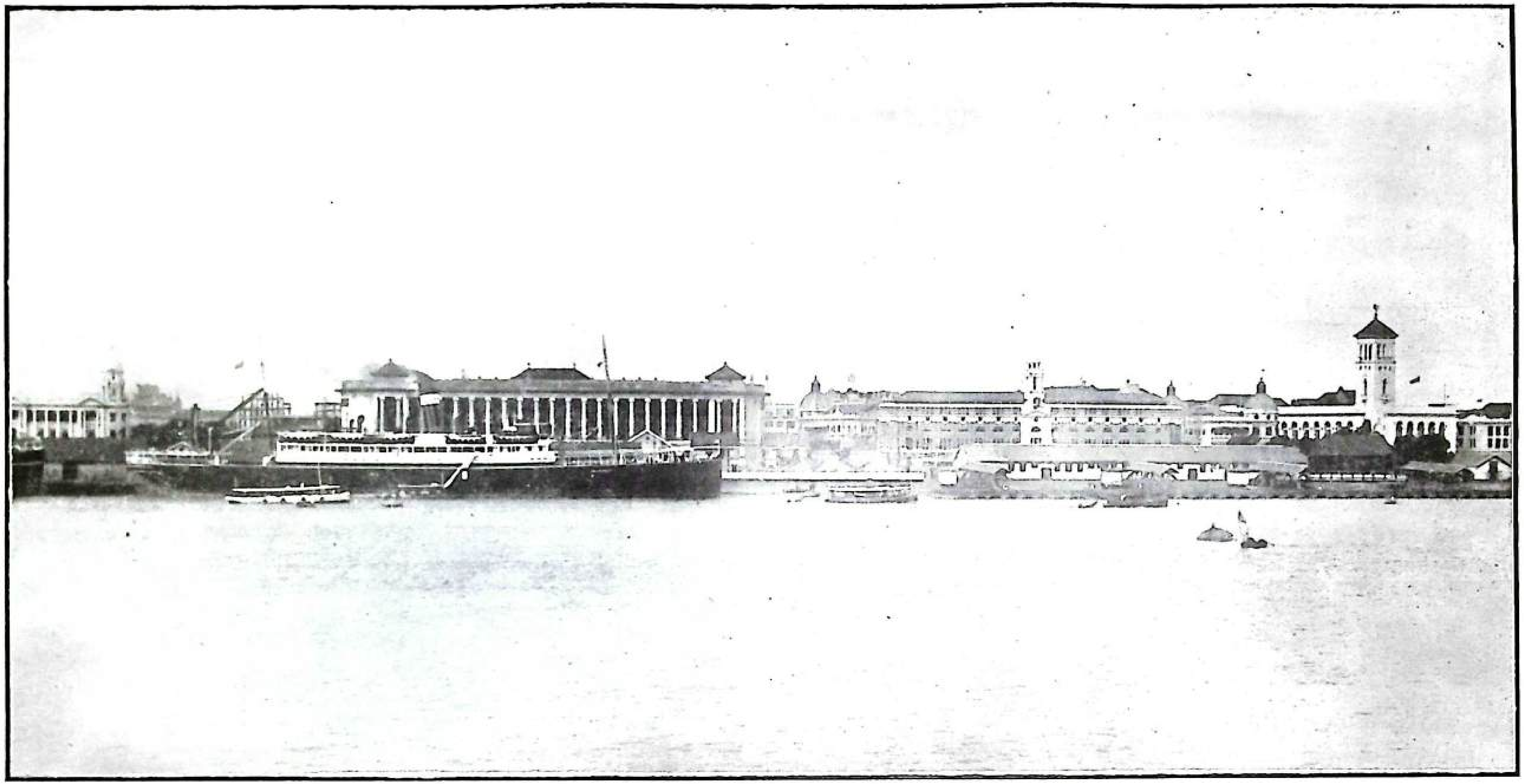
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PLATE No. 34



THE WATERFRONT, 1938

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

MODERN RANGOON: 1898—1938.

THE Burma Municipal Act of 1884 had by no means satisfied the demand for autonomy within the Municipality; but it was fourteen years before any further changes in the form of municipal government were made. The provincial government had viewed certain of the proceedings of the Municipal Committee with uneasiness, especially in regard to the matter of lodging-house rules, and had expressed the view that before further powers could be granted it was "necessary that the inhabitants should take greater care in the selection of suitable candidates for election, and that the members of the Committee should devote more care and attention to promoting the welfare of the public whom they represent"[1]. The effect of these considerations was that even when further legislation affecting municipal administration was undertaken no advance was made in the direction of self-government. The Burma Municipal Act of 1898 differed from its predecessor in that it was drafted expressly with regard to conditions in Burma and was not, like the Act of 1884, based on legislation applicable to Indian provinces; but in no other respect did it materially differ from the earlier Act. As was stated in the *Burma Administration Report* for 1897-98, "None of the changes effected by this Bill are of a fundamental nature. . . . . .Whilst the Act of 1884 contained only 161 sections, the new enactment contains 213, but the changes and additions though numerous do not alter the framework of Municipal Government." Moreover, the Act, like the legislation of earlier years, applied not to Rangoon alone but to all municipalities in Burma, and it was not unreasonably contended by the Municipal Committee that "it is impossible to draft an Act that will alike suit Rangoon and mere district villages"[2]. Thus under the new Act there was little effective change in the constitution or powers of the Committee. As before, Government might determine the number of members of the Committee and might also fill vacancies when no candidates were forthcoming at elections; provided that not more than one-quarter were to be nominated or *ex officio* members, though Government was empowered to make exceptions to this provision if it thought fit. The number of members was in fact fixed at twenty-four of whom six were nominees; but was increased to twenty-five in 1900 by the addition of a representative of the Rangoon Trades Association which had been founded in 1898. The term of office of the President was now fixed at two years, like that of committee-members. Thus no material change was made in the constitution of the Committee. In regard to powers, some matters which had formerly been dealt with by byelaws made under the general provisions of the Acts were specifically provided for by legislation; thus there was now express provision

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[1] *Annual Report of the Administration of Burma*, 1887-88.

[2] *Annual Report on the Working of the Rangoon Municipality*, 1897-98.

made for authority to establish and maintain a fire-brigade, whereas formerly this institution had been maintained under the general responsibility for public safety. But as against the provincial government, the Municipal Committee had no more independence than before.

The responsibilities of the Committee were, however, growing with rapidity. The limits of the municipal area were now extended. These had remained almost unchanged since 1876 except that in 1887 the military area at Monkey Point had been excluded from the town; and in 1886 the site of the Pegu Club, which, founded in 1871 in a bungalow in Cheape Road, had moved to its present compound in 1882, had been excluded from the Cantonment. In 1896 a somewhat more extensive change was made, when the site of the old Detail Hospital between Tank Road, Fraser Road, and Leeds Road, and the area along the west of Signal Pagoda Road, were also transferred to the Municipality. More notable transfers of land to the town were made with the new century: in 1900 the Kandawgale area was transferred; in 1908 the non-military parts of the Shwe Dagon platform, 49.74 acres in extent, were transferred by Government to the Pagoda Trustees and so came within the jurisdiction of the Municipality; and again in 1910 large areas—on the west the land between Ahlone Road, Leeds Road, the old south boundary of the Cantonment, Budd Road, Halpin Road, and Prome Road; and on the east the area between Lancaster Road and North Bazaar Road[1] and also the Bahan Quarter—were similarly transferred. In 1903, moreover, the northern limit of the municipal area was extended to coincide with the boundary of the Rangoon Town District of the governmental administration and so came to its present position, except for the portion of Kamayut north of Hanthawaddy Road which was not transferred to the Municipality until 1923.[2] The population of Rangoon was now over 200,000 and was still increasing; the Census of 1901 gave a return of 248,060: that of 1911 a return of 293,316: and that of 1921 a return of 341,962.

The municipal staff had to be increased to cope with the new conditions; and early in the century an Assistant Health Officer, a full-time Veterinary Officer, and additional Engineers were appointed. The principal members of the staff were now the Chief Engineer, the Deputy Engineer in charge of water and sewage services, the Veterinary Officer in charge of public scavenging and the health of animals in the town, the Health Officer, the Assessor in charge of the assessment and collection of taxes, the Chief Accountant, and the Secretary. Above these was the President, who supervised all departments and had wide powers in matters of appointments, sanctioning of expenditure, and finance generally. The burden of municipal administration became so heavy that in 1907 it was necessary to relieve the President of all non-municipal duties except those of Deputy Commissioner under the

[1] The part of this area north of Simpson Road was known as the Sudder Bazaar, whence the names North Bazaar Road and East Bazaar Road. It was occupied by the followers of the Cantonments.

[2] See Map No. VI.

Epidemic Diseases Act. The President, still appointed by Government, thus became the full-time executive officer of the Municipality.

A change was made in this period in the constitution of the police force. The police had, since 1882, been merged into the provincial police; but a committee appointed in 1894 had reported that the police in Rangoon lacked efficiency as a result of inadequate numbers, low pay, and want of sufficient supervision on the part of superior officers. It recommended that the force should be separated from the provincial police and constituted an independent force directly answerable to the provincial government, as in the Presidency towns in India. Legislation establishing these conditions was passed in the form of the Rangoon Police Act of 1899; and the change was completed in the year 1906 by the assimilation of the rank of the Commissioner of Police to that of a Deputy-Inspector General. The size of the force was also increased; in 1896 it had been 700 men: in 1906 it was over 900[1].

Crime continued to be common, despite the increase in the numbers of the force. The rapid growth of population in the newly reclaimed areas, for which there were still insufficient police, was the principal cause of crime, and dacoities in the suburbs were still by no means infrequent. There was, in the first decade of the century, also a development of a new type of criminal, the "gangster." In particular there were two rival gangs of criminals whose enmity expressed itself in violent outbreaks which had the dimensions of riots. "The peace of the Town," wrote the Commissioner of Police in his report for the year 1909, "was disturbed by riots between the followers of Meshidi and Mamsa. The smouldering enmity between these two men which heretofore found an outlet by the institution of false cases against each other, found a new vent in riots between the hired bravos of each." In the following year, however, several of Meshidi's men were convicted for rioting and the Commissioner of Police was able to record that "the extraordinary influence wielded by Meshidi and Mamsa over their followers, and the terrorism they thereby exercised over the town, has at last received a severe blow from which it is not likely to recover for some considerable time." Their activities seem nevertheless to have continued, for in 1912 two of Mamsa's men were convicted for murder, and Mamsa himself was tried, though he secured an acquittal. Conflicts between different Chinese societies were another fertile source of disturbance in this same period.

One of the most important problems which the Committee constituted by the Act of 1898 had to face was the perennial question of the water-supply. The last Committe elected under the Act of 1884 had, after much consideration of various rival schemes, agreed to the construction of a new reservoir at Hlawga, seventeen miles from Rangoon, which, at an expenditure of thirty-five lakhs, later estimated at only thirty-one lakhs, would provide water for a population of 650,000 at the rate of 25 gallons per head per day,

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[1] In 1936 the force numbered over fifteen hundred.

and so would meet the demand for many years to come. This decision was not taken until 1901, and meanwhile the situation had became serious. Experiments with tube wells had not been successful, and in 1901 it became necessary to cut off the supply from the Royal Lakes as the water was quite unfit for use; the whole supply of the town had now to be pumped up, at vast expense, to the Pagoda Hill reservoir. In 1903 the level of the Victoria Lake became "alarmingly low" and during the hot weather of that year it was necessary to reduce the supply from five-and-a-half to three-and-a-half million gallons a day for fear of complete water-famine before the rains broke. In the dry season a year later the supply available was only seventeen gallons per head per day, and the non-potable Royal Lakes water had to be brought into use for six weeks.

On the 22nd February 1904, however, the new Hlawga water-works were formally opened by the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Hugh Barnes, and the opinion was officially expressed that the Hlawga scheme was "a water supply project for efficiency and cheapness second to none in India and probably in the whole world." The cheapness was not, however, obvious to the Municipality, which had to pay Rs. 46,83,039 instead of the estimated Rs. 31,00,000. Further, the efficiency was also rapidly brought into doubt, for in its first year the reservoir did not fill to the anticipated level and did not seem likely to; while in 1905 a serious leak developed in one of the dams and a slip in another, and special military signalling parties had to stand by to give the necessary warning to the surrounding district in the event of the expected collapse, which would jeopardise the whole reservoir and would inundate the countryside and the Railway. Emergency weirs were cut, the level of the lake was thus lowered, and so the danger was averted, at a cost of Rs. 98,000. Apart from these misfortunes, it was further discovered that the scheme which was to have solved the water-supply problem for a long term of years would, in fact, supply a population of 207,000 only, instead of 650,000 as had been estimated; yet the population of Rangoon was already over 250,000. A committee of enquiry was appointed by Government to report on these circumstances, since the construction had been in the hands of the Public Works Department. This Committee observed that "the whole scheme should have been more thoroughly revised, and that for want of this revision the Public Works Department greatly under-estimated the cost of providing Rangoon with a new water-supply. The Committee also reports that the puddle wall in some of the dams had not been carried to the height designed, but was several feet below the level of the water; that no proper allowance had been made for settlement; and that the earthwork at the crest of one of the dams was of porous materials that should never have been used, and that these faults and the imperfect dovetailing of the puddle wall into a hill side were the cause of the accidents to the dams. It is also shown that an error, due to a miscalculation of the levels with the Town, has been made in the size of the main, and an immediate expenditure of 25 lakhs is necessary in



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consequence." The enquiry committee endeavoured to console the Municipality with the reflection that "looking at the Hlawga dam as it stands the Municipality have received full value and it is pointed out that the rates for earthwork were particularly low"; but, as the *Municipal Report* for 1905-06 observes, "the Municipality is chiefly concerned with the doubts which exist as to the stability of the dams and with the failure of the works to supply the amount of water which they were led to expect."

The Hlawga water scheme, therefore, that miracle of inefficiency, could be regarded as only an instalment of a larger project. The new reservoir was quite inadequate even for the immediate needs of the town, much less for the future needs of a rapidly growing population: many sections of the city remained, as they still remain to this day, dependent upon shallow wells, supplemented in Ahlone by tube-wells; and though the sewage system was extended in 1906-07 to parts of East Rangoon, and in 1912 to the area between the Jubilee Hall and the town, and in 1915 to the area between Voyle Road, Simpson Road, Signal Pagoda Road, and Stewart Road, the rest of the town remained and remains without any indoor sanitation, for want of water. In 1912 there was again definitely a shortage of water; for a burst pipe at the Yegu Pumping Station produced something like a water famine which was only averted by using once more the Kokine reservoir which was still maintained for emergencies: but this supply was not really potable and a warning had to be issued that the water derived from this source should be boiled before use. It was still complained that there was lack of water-pressure on the outskirts of the town and on the river banks. The consumption of water had risen to an average of 9½ million gallons a day by the year 1915-16, and to 12 millions by the year 1919-20; but the actual maximum consumption in the hot weather was about 15 million gallons. So by 1920 there was once more a regular shortage of water in the hot seasons. Attempts were made to prevent wastage through defective fittings in houses, careless use of public taps, and unauthorised opening of fire hydrants; and as early as 1912 it was resolved, in view of the inadequacy of the Pagoda Hill service-reservoir, to construct an additional reservoir at Kokine Hill. The war of 1914-19 held up this project which was however, completed in 1925 to hold twenty million gallons. The installing of a "booster" pumping-station on the main from Hlawga gave an increased supply of 1½ million gallons a day in 1927. But again such measures were only palliative; and though the Hlawga reservoir was extended in 1921-24, some other source of supply was required. Tube wells were sunk in Kemmendine; and enquiries were made into the possibility of purifying the water of the Kokine Victoria Lake, but this measure was found to be impracticable. More comprehensive measures were needed, and there was much discussion of several schemes, such as one for using the water of the Hlaing River, another for drawing water from the Yunzalin River in Karenni; but these were rejected in favour of the construction of a new reservoir in the Pegu Yoma, and this project is now under

construction. Meanwhile the water-supply is far from satisfactory, the worst sufferers being the inhabitants of Dalla to whom water has to be transported in boats. The lack of an adequate water-supply and the consequent failure to provide a proper sewage system for a large part of the municipal area have involved the continuance of the method of removing night-soil by carts to depots connected with the sewers; and so the Municipality was led into difficulties of a legal nature. The Burma Railways protested against the existence of the night-soil depot at Ahlone, which was situated in close proximity to the quarters of some of its employees, and secured an injunction in the courts restraining the Municipal Committee from continuing this nuisance. This situation was only met by the passing of the Rangoon Municipal Sewage Act 1920, which conferred on the Committee the authority to commit a statutory nuisance.

The shortage of water has also had the effect of hampering the efforts of the fire-brigade despite the introduction of motor fire-engines in 1909; the lack of water-pressure was most marked on the outskirts of the town and on the river banks, and it was in these quarters that the most inflammable buildings in the form of the houses of the poor and the rice and timber mills were situated. The damage caused by fire was still frequently extensive; thus in the year 1900-01 it amounted to Rs. 7,81,520; in 1905-06 to Rs. 10,18,320; in 1911-12 to Rs. 10,20,707; in 1912-13 to Rs. 11,00,000; in 1913-14 to Rs. 10,50,000; in 1918-19 to Rs. 26,00,000; in 1919-20 to Rs. 45,50,000; in 1920-21 to Rs. 21,00,000; in 1921-22 to Rs. 43,25,000; in 1925-26 to Rs. 13,89,130; in 1926-27 to Rs. 14,85,564; in 1926-27 to Rs. 27,81,176; in 1929-30 to Rs. 17,47,019; and in 1930-31 to Rs. 32,11,762. These fires were most disastrous in the suburbs inhabited by the poor, where on occasion even thousands were rendered homeless, as in the fire of February 1915 when six hundred huts in Kandawgale were destroyed, and again in the fires at Kemmendine in 1921-22 and 1925-26. But there were also serious out-breaks in some of the mills, involving, for example, the loss of property valued at fifteen lakhs when Messrs. Bulloch's rice-mill at Kanaungto was burnt out in November 1919; of property valued at fifteen and a half lakhs when Messrs. Jamal's rice and oil mills at Kemmendine were burnt in 1920-21, and at twenty lakhs when the same firm's rice mill at Kanaungto was burnt in the following year.

The Committee of 1898 was, like its predecessor, confronted also by the problem of the insanitary settlements around the town and the overcrowding within the town. It had been hoped that the reclamation scheme adopted for Lanmadaw would aid in solving this problem, but the direction issued by the Government of India that the proceeds of the Land Sale and Rent Fund should no longer be devoted to development of the town had in 1898 led the Municipal Committee to drop the scheme. The whole question was then, however, reconsidered, and in 1901 the Committee came to

an agreement with Government under which the proceeds of the Land Sale and Rent Fund were to be surrendered to the Municipality once more for a period of fifty years, while in consideration of this concession the Municipality would continue the work of reclamation. So reclamation was carried on in the west of Rangoon as well as in the east. It was in the course of these operations in East Rangoon that the last vestige of the Botataung Creek disappeared, except for a section along Creek Street between Merchant Street and Dalhousie Street which in 1908 was converted into a system for cooling the engines connected with the sewage plant. Reclamation was not, however, carried on without difficulties. It was found that some of the reclaimed land was being occupied before it had been equipped with drains and sanitation, and was thus likely to become once more unhealthy. It was found also that large areas were coming into the hands of builders and that the squatters who, it had been thought, would be accommodated on the reclaimed land, were having to remove away from the town to the already insanitary quarters of Tamwe on the east and Ahlone on the west. This was a feature of the Lanmadaw reclamation scheme particularly: for the benefit of the former inhabitants, reclaimed sites were sold to them at uneconomic prices "because of a professed attachment of the occupants for their cherished homes",[1] but once the sites had been secured on these favourable terms, they were quickly sold to land speculators, with the result that an area intended for the housing of the poor became "more and more occupied with buildings utilized for commercial purposes or for letting to tenants"[2]. So no relief ultimately was afforded to the shortage of housing in the town, there was a very real loss of property to the public, and, owing to the movement of population outwards, the prospect of reclamation had to be extended. Another difficulty was that the system of drainage introduced in East Rangoon proved defective, and it was complained in the *Municipal Report* for 1903-04 that in even moderately heavy rain much of East Rangoon was worse flooded than in former days, while the surface drainage of the eastern part of the town proper had been so interfered with by the reclamation works that the area around the Secretariat was in consequence partly under water in a heavy shower.

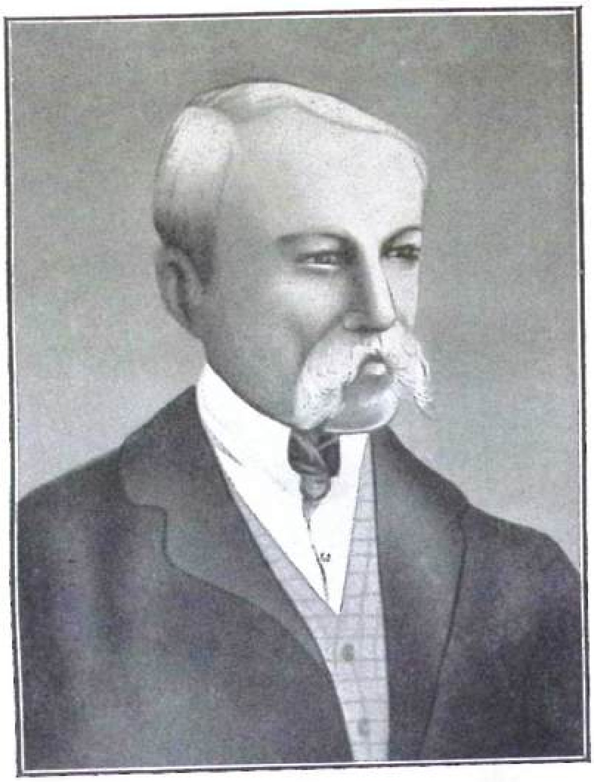
Apart from these technical problems, the reclamation scheme soon created financial difficulties, which arose partly from maladministration. Until January 1907 the offices of President of the Municipal Committee and Deputy Commissioner or Collector, Rangoon Town Lands, had been combined in one person; there had thus been unity of administration since the officer who expended the revenue on reclamation was also the officer who collected it. But from that date the President was relieved of his non-municipal duties and a separate Collector and Deputy Commissioner, Rangoon Town Lands, was appointed. Unity of administration thus ceased.

[1] *Annual Report on the Working of the Rangoon Development Trust*, 1921-22.
[2] *ibid.*

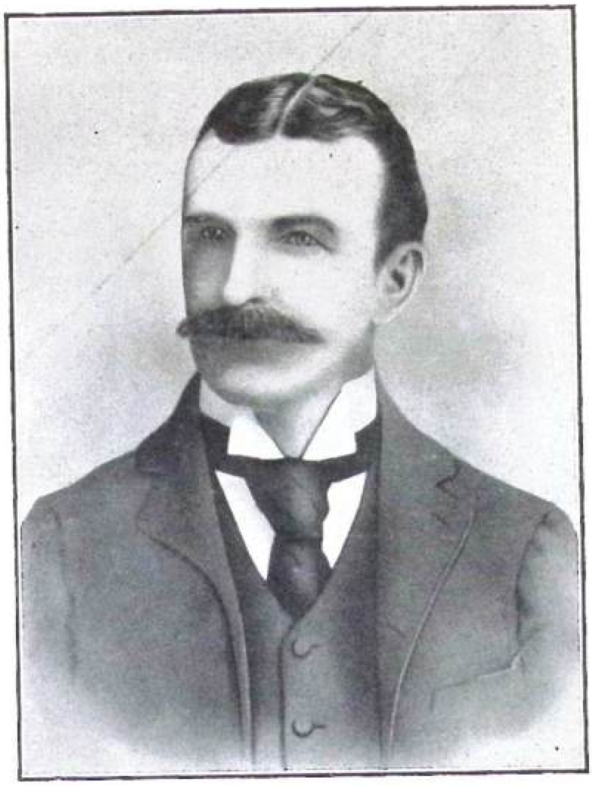
The Collector retained the revenue administration of the unsold lands, commonly called the Government Estate; for these lands, though their revenue had been allocated for the development of the city, were still the property of Government; while the Municipality carried out the work of reclaiming and equipping lands by means of funds provided from the revenues of the Estate after the deduction of administrative expenses. An attempt was made to ensure unity of administration by appointing a Town Lands Reclamation Advisory Committee, but this Committee could do little more than supervise the expenditure of whatever funds the Collector passed on to it. The lack of co-ordination between the revenue and the spending authorities had a disastrous effect, accentuated by the uneconomic disposal of land as in Lanmadaw. The rents derived from the Town Lands Fund were from the first inadequate for the work of reclamation, and loans had to be raised, the revenue received from the Collector being paid into a special Reclamation Fund on which the loans were a first charge; but by the middle of the second decade of the century the financial position of the Fund was most precarious. The Municipality had borrowed in all over sixty lakhs, and the revenues now received from the Collector were scarcely sufficient to cover the interest and loan charges; thus further loans could not be raised, the Government Estate being fully mortgaged, and although the whole of the borrowed money had been exhausted by 1917, so that no funds were available, reclamation was still urgently needed. The urgency of the problem was yearly accentuated by the steady increase of population. The overcrowding in the town proper was such that by 1911 in one quarter of central Rangoon the density of population amounted to 636 persons per acre (omitting non-residental buildings and open spaces) — a density greater than that of the most thickly populated wards of Calcutta and approaching the enormous figures of Bombay. Rangoon was fortunate in that Fraser's scheme provided some 43 per cent of open space in the form of roads and back drainage spaces, a circumstance which moderated the evil of overcrowding as known in Indian cities. But in spite of this advantage, there was obviously need for expansion into the outskirts of the town. Suburban development had so far been slight. As late as 1890 there was hardly a house round the Royal Lakes; Golden Valley was as yet uninhabited; only one or two houses lay along Boundary Road; and nothing at all to the north thereof. Between the Royal Lakes and the Railway were only Chinese market-gardens and paddy-fields. For another thirty years suburban development consisted of little besides the building of houses along Boundary Road and on the northern verge of the Royal Lakes, the opening up of Golden Valley[1], and the duplication of houses within the vast compounds of the older houses that lay on the land transferred piecemeal from the Cantonments. The obstacles that lay in the way of suburban development were two-fold: one, the configuration of the Rangoon area and the uses to which parts of that area had been put; two, the lack of transport

[1] The development of Golden Valley was first commenced in 1907, by the Golden Valley Estate Company. The term "Golden" was applied to this valley as indicative of the excellence of the property, hidden, like a buried treasure, in the jungle.

PLATE No. 36



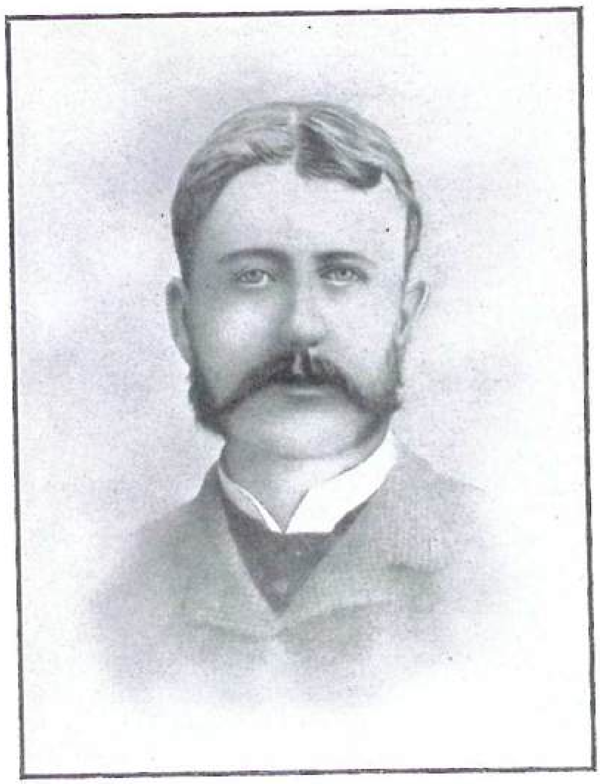
Major R. C. EVANSON, I.S.C.
President, 1874-1881



Mr. W. T. HALL, B.A., LL.B., I.C.S.
President, 1894-1895, 1895-1896, 1896-1897



Mr. G. M. S. CARTER
President, 1893-1894



Lt. Col. C. A. CRESSWELL, I.S.C.
President, 1895

facilities. It was observed that "Rangoon is situated on a peninsula bounded on the South and West by the Hlaing River and on the East by the Pazundaung Creek. Expansion is therefore possible in one direction only, *viz.*, northwards. But although the peninsula is four miles across, in 1921 practically the whole width was blocked by an impassable barrier. This consisted of the area occupied by Government House and grounds, the series of Military lands and open spaces stretching from Government House to the Shwedagon Pagoda, the Pagoda precincts, the Cantonment Gardens, the race-course maidan, the British Infantry lines, the Burma Athletic Association grounds, the Provincial Museum grounds, the Agri-Horticultural Society's gardens, the Victoria Memorial Gardens, the Municipal Wash-Houses, the Theinbyu Recreation Ground, Dalhousie Park with the Royal Lakes, and the Fokkien Chinese Burial Ground. Nor was it possible for the city to expand past the ends of this barrier. The Timber Depot of the Forest Department and the Singan and Alon Swamps completely closed the area between the Kemmendine Road and the Hlaing River to expansion on the West. On the east the Tamwe Rubbish Depot of the Corporation, the Mahlwagon Railway Sidings and the swamps extending from Tamwe to the Pazundaung Creek imposed an even more insuperable obstacle to expansion"[1].

From this circumstance, that the centre of the peninsula was largely occupied by public land not available for private building, arose the peculiarity that whereas in most cities there is a centre core of industrial and commercial regions surrounded by residential areas outside, in the case of Rangoon there was and is a geographic centre of unused or sparsely inhabited land, with the industrial and commercial region forming an arc around it along the verge of the River and the Pazundaung Creek. These peculiar conditions forced the population to crowd together in the immediate neighbourhood of the industrial areas, generally under most unhealthy conditions, while the land most suitable for dwelling-places remained unoccupied. The fairly well-to-do classes were still residing in the town proper or close to it, so that not only were the poorer workers overcrowded but also rents were abnormally high, the clerical class spending an average of twenty-five per cent of income on rent alone. The only solution was to be found in a centrifugal movement of the better-off classes, and in reclamation on an extensive scale. The laterite ridge running northwards from the Pagoda was naturally adapted for the residences of the well-to-do and middle classes; while the land behind the River and Creek both east and west of the town proper could, if reclaimed, accommodate a large industrial population which was as yet overcrowded along the verge of the industrial arc[2].

But the progress of outer-suburban development was hampered by lack of means of communication. The road-system outside the town proper was

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[1] *Rangoon Development Trust Manual*, p. 186.

[2] See Map VII which shows the industrial arc and the barrier of public land to the north of the town not available for building purposes.

inadequate and provided an altogether insufficient means of communication between the city and the north, a circumstance which arose from "the absence of any past endeavours to adapt Lieutenant Fraser's initial plan of the city to future requirements. The roads running East and West in his plan could easily have been deflected northwards by easy curves or corners as they approached the flanks of the peninsula had a little forethought been exercised in the past". As it was, "there were only three roads leading out of Rangoon to to the north, *viz.*, Prome Road, Tiger Alley, and Kokine Road. These three roads ultimately culminated in two roads, the Insein Road reaching as far as Mingaladon, and the Prome Road"[1].

Apart from the lack of adequate roads, there was also the factor that so long as motor and electric traction were unknown, the mass of population, of all classes, had no option but to live as near as possible to the commercial and industrial areas; only with the development of modern forms of transport did the centrifugal movement of population become possible. At the beginning of the century the only modern method of street transport was the steam tramway, but the tramway system had fallen into a very bad condition; traffic returns were insufficient to pay dividends and to provide funds for the proper maintenance of the track, with the result that the Municipal Committee in 1900 declared that the system was "a nuisance and a danger to the public, and in consequence of the high fares charged, it is doubtful whether it is, or has ever been, of the benefit to Rangoon that tramways are supposed to be, and generally are, to most towns". The passengers, moreover, complained that the sparks from the engines burnt their clothes. In 1896 the tramway company had been called on by the Municipality to improve the condition of its property, and in 1899 owing to its failure to do so had been proceeded against in the courts and fined under the Rangoon Tramways Act. The tramway company now expressed its willingness to introduce electric trams if a forty years' lease were granted, but the Municipality was of opinion that the company should be wound up. It had happened that the suggestion had been made that electric street lighting should be introduced in place of the system of oil-lamps, a proposal that Messrs. P. Orr & Sons should provide gas-lighting having been found impracticable; and the Municipal Engineer had made enquiries into the matter while he was on leave in 1895. Now the two schemes, for electric lighting and for electric tramways, were combined. Messrs. J. W. Darwood repurchased the tramway system in 1902 and in the following year their tender for lighting and transport was accepted, the Committee retaining the right to buy out the tramway after forty-two years. On the 15th December 1906 the first electric tramcar ran, under the auspices of the new Rangoon Electric Tramway and Supply Company, from the Surati Bazaar Road at Kemmendine to the Surati Bazaar in the town, and during the following year the system of electric tramways as it now exists was almost completed. In 1907 electric street-lighting commenced.

[1] *Rangoon Development Trust Manual*, pp. 186, 188.

But such means of transport as electric tramways, though useful within the city, did not meet the needs of the outer suburban areas. The railway system, moreover, tapped only the extreme east and the extreme west of the peninsula and could not, without vast expense, provide a net-work of communications such as would be required if the interior of the peninsula were to be opened up. Thus a movement of population away from the centre was not possible until the advent of the motor car. The private motor car had made its appearance about 1905, and by 1906 the number of such vehicles was sufficiently numerous to call for legislation in the form of the Burma Motor Vehicles Act. The advent of the motor-bus was slightly later. In October 1913 the Rangoon Electric Tramway and Supply Company introduced five motor-buses, and in 1915 there were eight buses and twenty-eight taxicabs plying. By the same year there were four hundred and twenty-six private cars and lorries and one hundred and thirty-nine motor-cycles in the municipal area. But again the use of motor-transport on an extensive scale was not possible without great improvement in the system of the petrol-engine, as is indicated by the withdrawal of the Rangoon Electric Tramway and Supply Company's fleet of buses in 1915; nor without a great improvement in the condition of the roads. The Rangoon roads had never been good; the dearth of suitable road-metal had made road construction and repair difficult and costly. Laterite was used for a time in the 1880's but the expense was too great and ship's ballast continued to be used until the beginning of the new century. Then the increased traffic and other circumstances played havoc with the road surface, so that in 1910 it was admitted that "the condition of the roads is far from satisfactory. The extensive trenching operations that have been going on for the past ten years and are still going on in connection with the laying of new water and sewage mains, and the relaying and regrading of old sewage mains, have been responsible to a very great extent for the present condition of the roads. The Municipal Engineer has reason to believe that there is hardly a road in Rangoon Town, with the exception of the asphalted and wood paved portions of Merchant Street and of the roads recently constructed by the Town Lands Reclamation Department, which has a foundation capable of resisting the extraordinary traffic to which our roads in Rangoon are subject. In the majority of cases an examination of the foundations has revealed the fact that these are composed of a layer of old Burmese bricks laid flat, and in a few cases no foundation at all could be traced. It is therefore not to be wondered at that these roads soon show signs of wear after remetalling. The hand carts, with narrow-tyred wheels, which are enormously overloaded, are very destructive and the only remedy is to strip the entire roadway in each case and to put down a new foundation of stone soling"[1]. It was considered that ordinary macadam was no longer suitable for the town roads, and experiments were carried out with various types of road material. Tar-painting had already been tried

[1] *Annual Report on the Working of the Rangoon Municipality*, 1910-11.

and in 1910 was pronounced "an acknowledged success," but it was found more suitable for the minor and suburban roads than for the major city roads. Pallavaram stone was tried, and Bombay blue-stone; wood-paving had been experimented with as early as 1897, though it was not a success; and asphalt was tried ten years later. In sections where the traffic was particularly heavy, as along the Strand, stone-sett paving was introduced. That the condition of the roads needed serious attention was made the more evident by the advent of the motor-car. It was found that the swift-moving traffic cut up the macadamised roads almost as much as the slow but heavy hand-carts, and that in consequence the dust-nuisance was increasing. The asphalted and tar-painted roads were more resistant to the traffic, but they offered little resistance to the dust blown on to them by the strong winds of the hot months from the macadamised thirty-foot roads; while the commencement of regular motor-bus services in 1913, when the Rangoon Electric Tramway & Supply Company introduced its first five buses, "emphasised in no uncertain manner the unsafe and unsatisfactory condition of those main thoroughfares over which they ply, the reconstruction of which has not yet been taken in hand. It has been found necessary to prohibit the plying of the buses over some of these streets, as since they are not provided with a foundation sufficiently strong to support the weight of the buses, the passage of the buses over the uneven surface was found to be causing serious vibrations amongst the houses abutting on such streets"[1]. A thorough reconstruction of the roads was therefore undertaken; and though work was held up during the War, when, moreover, the heavy timber traffic of the Munitions Board played havoc with the roads, the last thirty years have seen an almost complete reconditioning of the 183 miles of roads in Rangoon, which now may be favourably compared with those of almost any other city of the same magnitude. And with the introduction of better roads and new means of transport—indicated by the revival of the Rangoon Electric Tramway and Supply Company's bus service in 1926—it became possible to develop the suburbs.

The reclamation of low-lying areas within the municipal limits and the development of suburban roads were no light task; and since the Reclamation Advisory Committee had found the work beyond its powers, the solution was found in the institution in 1920 of the Rangoon Development Trust. This Trust, whose Board consists of a Chairman appointed by Government, the head of the Municipality, the Municipal Commissioner, the Agent of the Burma Railways, the Managing Director of the Rangoon Electric Tramway & Supply Company, two members elected by the Legislature, two elected by the Municipality, four nominated by Government, and one each nominated by the Port Commissioners, the Burmese Chamber of Commerce, the Burma Chamber of Commerce, the Rangoon Trades Association, and the Rate-Payers' Association, has charge of the Government Estate, and has power to

[1] *ibid.* 1913-14.

PLATE No. 37



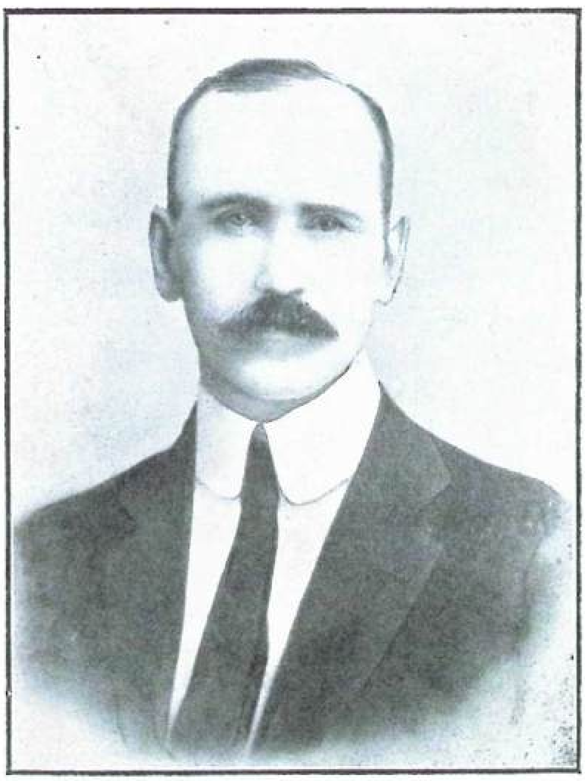
Mr. H. L. EALES, I.C.S.
President, 1896, 1897-1899



Mr. W. H. A. St. JOHN LEEDS, I.C.S.
President, 1899-1903, 1903-1904



Mr. H. L. TILLY
President, 1899



Mr. M. LAURIE, M.V.O., I.C.S.
President, 1903, 1904-1910

develop this Estate and to acquire land for development. It derives its income from the rents and sales of the Estate, a contribution of one lakh per annum from the Municipality, a stamp duty of two per cent on transfers of immovable property in Rangoon, and a tax of two rupees levied through the shipping companies on all male passengers leaving Rangoon for ports outside Burma.

The task which the new Trust had to face was two-fold: to reclaim the water-logged land and insanitary settlements in both the east and the west of Rangoon and so to provide accommodation for the housing of the poorer classes, and also to construct new roads which would enable the suburbs to develop. In connection with the former task, large areas of land have been reclaimed and equipped with roads and drains: in the east, the land near Monkey Point and the area between the town proper, the Pazundaung Creek, and the new race-course at Kyaikkasan, including the Kandawgale and Theinbyu areas which have been laid out as playing-fields; and in the west, at Kemmendine and in the Sangyaung valley which has been reclaimed through Myenigon as far as Kemmendine. More than ten thousand housing sites have been prepared, of which over eight thousand are ready for habitation and seven thousand five hundred are already occupied. Much yet remains to be done, however, for evil slums still exist in such areas as Dalla and in the neighbourhood of the Pazundaung Creek. In regard to communications, important works have been constructed such as the extension of the Strand Road to Kemmendine in the west, and the building of the Kyaikkasan and Tamwe roads in the east to link Theinbyu with the new race-course area; a trans-peninsular road has also been planned and is now almost completed, from the Hlaing River at Kemmendine through Bagaya Pongyi Road, Boundary Road, Shwegondaing Road, and Masjid Road to Upper Pazundaung Road. Other important suburban road developments have been made such as the University Avenue and Goodliffe Road, which have opened up extensive suburban areas in the north, where housing development has recently been rapid. The extension of Voyle Road across the *maidan* to the Pagoda Road railway-bridge and the widening of Voyle Road are now in hand as an amplification of communications to the north.

By the 31st March 1937, the Trust had expended Rs. 147,89,000 on development, and had in addition repaid almost the whole of the outstanding debt of the old Town Lands Reclamation Fund.

The last two decades have thus seen considerable development of suburban Rangoon, especially on the laterite ridge where more attractive building-sites are to be found than in the lower-lying areas such as along the Kokine Road[1]. The opening of the Government Estate for suburban housing as in Windermere Park, which was commenced in 1921, gave stimulus to this development; and the policy adopted by the Development Trust of granting

[1] See Plate No. 30 — *Tiger Alley, 1938;* compare Plate No. 24 — *Tiger Alley, 1855.*

leases of ninety years or leases in perpetuity subject to a periodic revision of ground rent, as the only policy compatible with proper urban development, has had a marked effect in the great improvement which recent years have seen in residential and other buildings.

At the same time the reclamation of low-lying land in East Rangoon and on the fringe of the industrial areas generally has checked the excessive increase of population in the centre of the city. Between the years 1911 and 1921, when the population of the whole municipal area increased by 18 per cent, the population of the central area increased from 91,025 to 113,700, i.e. an increase of 25 per cent. But between the years 1921 and 1931 when the population as a whole increased by 15.8 per cent, the population of the centre increased from 113,700 to 117,584, i.e. an increase of 3.9 per cent only. Thus whereas in former days the growth of population was most marked in the centre, now it is most marked in the newly reclaimed areas.

The centrifugal movement is illustrated also by such developments as the removal of the Rangoon Turf Club to new premises at Kyaikkasan in 1926, and the removal of the garrison to Mingaladon in 1928. One effect of this latter change was that, as only a keleton force was maintained to hold the barracks on the Pagoda Hill, an area of 654 acres of land was transferred from the Cantonment authority to the Municipality, so that in effect the Cantonments came to consist only of the Sale Barracks to the south of the Shwe Dagon, and a few houses and offices by Voyle and Godwin Roads. The platform of the Pagoda was entirely demilitarised; and the Prendergast Barracks[1] along Prome Road were made over to the Burma Military Police.

Another illustration of the outwards movement can be found in the establishment of the new University of Rangoon estate near Kamayut. The old Rangoon College, charge of which Government had resumed from the Educational Syndicate in 1904, and the American Baptist Mission College which had developed as an offshoot of the Baptist High School (now known as Cushing High School) in 1894, were incorporated in a University of Rangoon in 1920, so ceasing to work under the regulations of the Calcutta University. A change of nomenclature was at the same time adopted, the Rangoon College becoming University College and the Baptist Mission College adopting the name of Judson College in memory of the founder of the Mission. Between the years 1924 and 1932 these institutions were gradually removed to new buildings on the northern boundary of the city.

The present century has seen a continuous improvement in the public buildings within the city proper[2]. A number of expensive public institutions have been erected, one of the principal of which is the General Hospital. The old timber-built hospital had by the early 1890's become much too small: the Civil Surgeon annually complained of overcrowding, and pointed out that patients had to be accommodated on the verandahs for lack of room in the

[1] Named after the general commanding the expeditionary force in 1885.

[2] See Plate No. 32 —*Merchant Street, 1938;* and compare Plate No. 18 —*Merchant Street, 1869.*

wards. A committee appointed by the provincial government recommended the erection of a new hospital in conjunction with a medical school, but the Municipal Committee was reluctant to incur the heavy expenditure involved in constructing completely new buildings and passed a resolution recommending the enlargement of the old hospital. Ultimately, Government assumed responsibility for the hospital as from the 1st December 1902, and it was then decided to replace the old building "of wood saturated by generations of microbes (which) was a disgrace to civilization"[1], by a new building to be erected on the site of the Agri-Horticultural Society's premises. The Society was given new grounds at Kandawgale and in 1904-05 it removed thither, the Phayre Museum, for which the Society had been responsible, being in October 1904 made over to the Archaeological Department and the exhibits housed for a time in a building in York Road until in March 1905 they were transferred to the Secretariat. The old Phayre Museum building was demolished, and Government undertook to establish a new Provincial Museum, a promise which has not been implemented. The Hospital was then erected, and was the first public building in Burma in which reinforced concrete was used. It was completed in 1911 at a cost of over forty lakhs.

When the Agri-Horticultural Society's premises were removed to Kandawgale, a separate Zoological Garden was established. An exhibition of wild animals had been instituted in connection with the Phayre Museum in 1882, in the grounds of the Agri-Horticultural Society; but in 1901 a subscription-list was opened for the provision of a separate Zoological Garden as a memorial to the late Queen-Empress Victoria. In all over Rs. 2,40,000 was collected and placed in the hands of trustees; Government granted sixty-one acres of land near the Royal Lakes, and after the squatters had been evicted and the area had been reclaimed, the animals were removed to their new quarters. The Victoria Memorial Park and Zoological Gardens were formally opened in January 1906 by the Prince and Princess of Wales. Among the exhibits was King Thibaw's White Elephant, which had been brought to Rangoon in 1887 and which survived till 1910.

In the same period the Chief Court building, now the High Court, necessitated by the establishment of the Chief Court of Lower Burma in 1900, was commenced in 1905, and completed at a cost of twenty-four and a half lakhs in 1911. A new Government Press office was completed in 1910; a new Custom House in 1915; and a new Central Telegraph Office in 1917. In 1923 the Agri-Horticultural Gardens were again moved, to the present premises adjoining the Zoological Garden which gave up twenty acres of ground for the purpose; the Society's former site was reserved for the still unbuilt museum and for a technical school which also has not materialised; the ground is in fact now in use as playing-fields. An enlarged Dufferin Hospital was

[1] Thirkell White, *A Civil Servant in Burma*, p. 12 sqq.

completed in 1930; in 1929 the new Lunatic Asylum at Tadagale was occupied; and in 1931 the new Police Courts were completed.

Another important building was the new municipal market in Commissioner Road on the site of the old tramway depot. In 1904 the Port Commissioners' scheme for reclaiming the foreshore and extending their wharfs by linking up the Sule Pagoda wharfs with the new wharf which was being built at Latter Street was held up by a dispute with the Municipality about the right to the foreshore in front of the Strand Market, and the scheme had to be modified. The Commissioners were willing to purchase the market-site, the buildings on which had fallen into a state of disrepair on which the provincial Government had commented with disfavour, and after protracted negotiations, which were further held up by the War, an agreement was arrived at in 1920 that the site should be sold for twenty-seven lakhs of rupees, the money to be expended in erecting a new market. The Municipality continued to occupy the Strand site as tenants until the new market, known as the Scott Market after Mr. Gavin Scott, the Municipal Commissioner, was completed in 1926. The new Strand Wharf was completed in 1930, and formally opened in February 1931.

The Municipality also contributed to the public buildings of the town by building a new City Hall. In 1903 an area of land behind the old Town Hall was purchased for an extension of the old building, at a cost of Rs. 1,69,182, for the development of the Municipality's establishment necessitated more office-space, and for a time the need could be met only by renting the upper floor of Messrs. Rowe & Company's building near to the Town Hall. Moreover, it was felt that there should be a municipal building more in keeping with the importance of the city. The old Town Hall, which from the first had been in poor condition, was not even safe; in 1911 it was reported that "the office of the Health Department is unsafe and arrangements are being made to strengthen the roof and remove the flooring," and also that "the roof of the portico (of the Town Hall), which was found to be in danger of collapsing, has been removed"[1]; while a year later "the Town Hall was found to be over-run with plague-infected rats and was consequently condemned by the Health Officer". The Municipal Committee therefore resolved to award three prizes, of £300, £200 and £100 respectively, for the three best designs submitted for "a building with some pretensions to architectural beauty". The competition closed on the 1st May 1913, and the first prize was awarded to Mr. L. A. McClumpha, of Rangoon, of whose design the assessor for the competition wrote, "In proportion, in restraint, in dignity the Municipal Offices and Public Hall when built will be the finest group of architectural buildings in Burma"[2]. Work was, however, held up by the War, and not till 1926 was much progress made; in that year the construction of the new Council Chamber and of the first block of offices was commenced. This block was built

[1] *Annual Report on the Working of the Rangoon Municipality*, 1910-11.
[2] *ibid.* 1912-13.

PLATE No. 38



Mr. W. H. L. CABELL, I.C.S.
President, 1911-1913, 1913-1917



Dr. BA YIN
President, 1924



Mr. GAVIN SCOTT, M.A., C.I.E., I.C.S.
President, 1913, 1917-1920, 1921-1922
Commissioner 1922-1930



Mr. C. H. CAMPAGNAC, M.B.E., Barrister-at-Law
President, 1927

facing a new road, Corporation Street, whose construction parallel to Dalhousie Street and the consequent blocking of 33rd and 34th Streets formed almost the first breach that had been made in the symmetry of Fraser's plan within the city proper. The Corporation Street block and Council Chamber were formally opened in 1927 by the Governor of Burma, Sir Spencer Harcourt Butler; and plans for blocks of buildings to be erected facing Fytche Square and Sule Pagoda Road were at the same time called for. Work on this part of the scheme was delayed by a demand that features of Burmese architecture should be incorporated in it, and this demand having been acceded to, the new buildings, erected on the site of the old Town Hall, were opened in 1936 by His Excellency Sir Archibald Cochrane, Governor of Burma.

Public amenities have also received a good deal of attention. Dalhousie Park, which had been placed under the charge of the Municipal Committee in 1885, although not properly laid out till 1897, had by 1903 become "much neglected, and it will take a considerable time, and it will cost much, to get it into proper order again". Mr. J. Short, the Secretary to the Municipality, who had carried out the improvements in the '90's, again took it in hand, and under "his tender care", in the words of the *Municipal Report* for 1904-05, it became "a unique combination of natural beauty and the art of landscape gardening". On his retirement in 1907, Mr Short was appointed Honorary Curator of the Park. Fytche Square, where in 1896 had been placed a statue of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, the gift to the city of Messrs. Balthazar, was improved in 1903 by the erection of a bandstand, presented by Messrs. M. F. and E. I. Cohen. A year later plans were made for the establishment of the Dufferin Gardens in East Rangoon; and also for a park in West Rangoon which, on completion of the necessary reclamation work, was taken over by the Municipal Committee in 1913. In 1906 the dhobis' tank at Kandawgale was put under reclamation, and in 1909 came into use as the grounds of the Burma Athletic Association. In 1907 the ground around Rebecca's Well in Phayre Street was transferred to the Municipality for use as a public garden.

Recent years have also seen great improvements in the administration of the port. The institution of the Port Trust in 1880 had not had the beneficial effect that had been anticipated. One difficulty was that the Vice-Chairman and Executive Officer of the Port Commission was also Collector of Customs and was thus overburdened with duties. An agitation commenced among the mercantile interests in 1896 for a separation of these offices, and in 1901 the Trust was remodelled, the superior executive control being placed in the hands of a combined Chairman and Chief Engineer in the person of Mr. (afterwards Sir) George Buchanan, the two offices remaining combined until 1920. Much energy was displayed, after the reorganization, in the development of the port. In 1896 the commercial interests had represented that "the port was then lacking in adequate accommodation for sea-going

steamers, appliances for handling cargoes, and proper storage accommodation." There were only 2,105 linear feet of quay space available for the sea-borne trade and 196,000 square feet of shed accommodation. The riverine traffic was confined to three small jetties of antiquated style at the end of China Street. Within six years after the reform of the Trust the accommodation at the Latter Street and Sule Pagoda wharfs had been doubled, adding some 300,000 square feet to the shedding accommodation, and hydraulic cranes had been introduced. The quayage for the sea-borne trade had been increasd to 3,415 feet, and the riverine traffic had been removed to new floating pontoons at Lanmadaw. The total cost of these works was 104 lakhs of rupees. Still more important was the undertaking of a scheme for training the River. For many years the River had been eroding its right bank above Rangoon to such an extent as to divert the deep water channel from the east to the west, so endangering the Rangoon wharfs. In 1903 the Port Trust took into consideration a scheme for constructing a training-wall two and a half miles long and in parts as much as 70 feet below low-water level, in the hope that thus the River would be diverted back to the channel which it had formerly occupied. Concurrently with this scheme, further measures were consistently carried on for the extension of the wharfs. The training-wall was completed in 1914 at a cost of about one hundred and thirty-eight lakhs; and in 1927 a similar work, known as the King's Bank wall, was completed lower down the River at a cost of about thirty-five lakhs. In 1925 a scheme which, after interruption during the period of financial depression, is now being proceeded with, was commenced for a complete reconstruction in ferro-concrete of the wharf system for sea-going vessels.

Despite the undoubted improvements which have been effected by the public bodies of Rangoon in recent years, much remains to be done. The housing conditions of the poor are still extremely bad, and there are quarters of Rangoon which cannot be characterised as anything but slums. The situation in regard to housing continues to be complicated by the presence of the immigrant labourer. In 1913 there were 288,582 immigrants from Indian ports; in 1920 there were 300,288; in 1927 there were 361,086. The numbers of emigrants to Indian ports in the same years were respectively 242,679, 188,999, and 280,739; so that in those years there passed through the port no less than 531,261, 489,287 and 641,825 travellers mainly of humble status from and to Indian ports. Of these a considerable number must have remained in Rangoon in some form of occupation. The Census of 1901 showed that of the total population of 248,000, there were 119,000 Indians, as against 81,000 Burmans, i.e. 48 per cent as against 33 per cent. In the Census of 1911 there were, of a total of 293,000, no less than 165,000 Indians, i.e. 56 per cent, as against 90,000 Burmans, i.e. 31 per cent; and in 1921 the Census gave a return of 187,000 Indians as against 105,000 Burmans, out of a total of 342,000, i.e. a similar proportion of 55 per cent as against 31 per cent. In 1931 the Indian population was 212,000, or 53 per cent of the whole, as compared with

128,000 Burmans or 32 per cent of the whole[1]. Thus with a growing population of poor labourers living in the city and a vast horde of poor travellers passing through it, Rangoon was still faced with the housing problems that had caused so much difficulty in the 1880's. In 1907 the Municipal Committee considered a proposal to provide model houses for the poor, but this was not accepted; and though a resolution was passed agreeing to hold an exhibition for the encouragement of good designs and economy in house-building, no action was taken in pursuance of this decision; and when a further proposal that the Municipality should erect model coolie-barracks was brought forward the following year, the Committee did not see its way to undertaking this responsibility. Despite, too, the lodging-house rules, no effective improvement was made in the conditions under which the poor labourer had to live. A Report issued by the Social Service League states that in Lanmadaw the houses occupied by the poor are "insanitary in every respect, the latrines being particularly bad"; and in Ahlone there were found "very many old houses, whose construction is faulty and the general sanitation of which can best be described as hopeless". Overcrowding in the lodging-houses continues, and though prosecutions are numerous, amounting in one year, 1925, to as many as 1,414 with resultant fines Rs. 10,367 and costs Rs. 1,285, nevertheless overcrowding cannot cease because no alternative accommodation exists. In the words of an observer better qualified than anyone else to state the facts, "it is surprising that in an extremely well laid out town, dwelling houses are allowed to be so constructed as hardly even to allow proper light, air and sunshine to enter the living rooms, which, owing to the conditions of labour in the city, are perennially greatly overcrowed..... It is astonishing that in an important industrial and commericial centre like Rangoon, where thousands of Indian labourers live and work, no steps have been taken to provide suitable and sanitary accommodation for the working class population"[2]. The Social Service League, in words which might have equally well been written forty years before, asserts that "our visits have shown us clearly that the physical, mental and moral health of the labouring population of Rangoon is being endangered; that money is being made out

[1] *Census Returns* 1901, 1911, 1921, 1931.

	1901	1911	1921	1931
1. Burmese	77,825	88,264	103,218	121,998
2. Karens	848	1,289	1,923	
3. Other Indigenous Races	3,013	600	526	5,584
4. Total of 1 — 3	81,686	90,153	105,667	127,582
5. Hindus	77,444	111,105	126,184	140,901
6. Muslims	41,846	54,390	61,791	70,791
7. Total of 5 — 6	119,290	165,495	187,975	211,692
8. Chinese	11,018	16,055	23,819	30,626
9. Europeans	3,805	5,732	3,586	4,377
10. Anglo-Indians	4,674	5,831	8,343	9,878
11. Armenians	191	219	252	136
12. Jews	508	750		1,069
Total population	248,060	293,316	341,962	400,415

[2] Andrews, *Indian Labour in Rangoon*, p. 178 sqq.

of this by the unprincipled action of landlords, and that these last are enabled to do this because the Municipal Authority has hitherto failed to make adequate provision for the labour on which this Municipality is founded"[1]. It may, however, be observed that not dissimilar criticisms might be made of nearly every large city in the world.

Under such conditions the statistics of public health inevitably show little improvement. In the first ten years of the century, from 1901 to 1910, the average number of deaths per thousand was 38.95, the worst years being 1905 and 1906 when, owing to a severe epidemic of plague, the mortality was 45.9 and 47.57 per thousand respectively. In the succeeding decade, 1911 to 1920, the average mortality was 36.18 per thousand, the worst years being 1918 and 1919, the years of the influenza epidemic, when the death-rate was 47.84 and 47.68 respectively. In the third decade of the century the average death-rate was 33.81. Infant mortality continues to be heavy, and the death-rate of children under twelve months of age remains constant at somewhat over 300 per thousand, so that only one child in three that is born has any prospect of surviving its first year. Occasionally, as in 1919, 1924, and 1925, the infant death-rate has risen to over 350 per thousand.

In regard to the commerce which is responsible for the presence in the city of its large population, in the year 1899-1900 the sea-borne imports, foreign and coastal, amounted to a value of Rs. 913,34,000, and the exports to Rs. 1354,00,000. In the year 1913-14 the total value of imports was Rs. 2451,00,000 and of exports Rs. 3122,00,000. Again the development of commerce is reflected in the establishment of new commercial houses, such as the Rangoon branch of the old-established Glasgow firm of Graham's, now Graham's Trading Company, in 1903. Similarly the establishment of the firm of jewellers, Messrs. Coombes, in 1906, is an indication of a growing prosperity in the town. In 1910 the Mercantile Bank of India—the reconstructed Chartered Mercantile Bank—reopened a branch in Rangoon[2].

Trade was, however, affected seriously by the War of 1914-19. Markets and prices were disorganised, and shipping suffered considerably from the constriction of trade. The closing of the German and Austrian markets, the restrictions placed on trade with neutrals, the requisitioning of shipping by Government, and the complete cessation of all sea-borne trade for a time owing to the depredations of the German cruiser *Emden*, showed their effect in the facts that whereas in 1913-14 the number of ships engaged in the foreign trade that entered the port was 326 with a total tonnage of 1,000,256 tons, in 1914-15 only 263 such ships of total tonnage 775,819 tons came in; and similarly the coastal traffic decreased from 1265 vessels of 1,947,195 tons to 1066 of 1,642,375 tons; while shipping rates rose from about 26s. a ton to about 80s.

[1] Quoted Andrews, *op. cit.*, p. 170 sqq.

[2] This branch was situated in Phayre Street, where the National Bank of India is now sited; in 1913 it was removed to a site in Dalhousie Street, where the Bombay Restaurant now is; and was again removed to its present premises in 1922.

PLATE No. 39



U THEIN MAUNG, M.A., LL.B.
President, 1931



U KYAW ZAN
Mayor, 1935



Dr. R. S. DUGAL
President, 1933



Mr. M. M. RAFI, Barrister-at-Law
President, 1929
Mayor, 1936



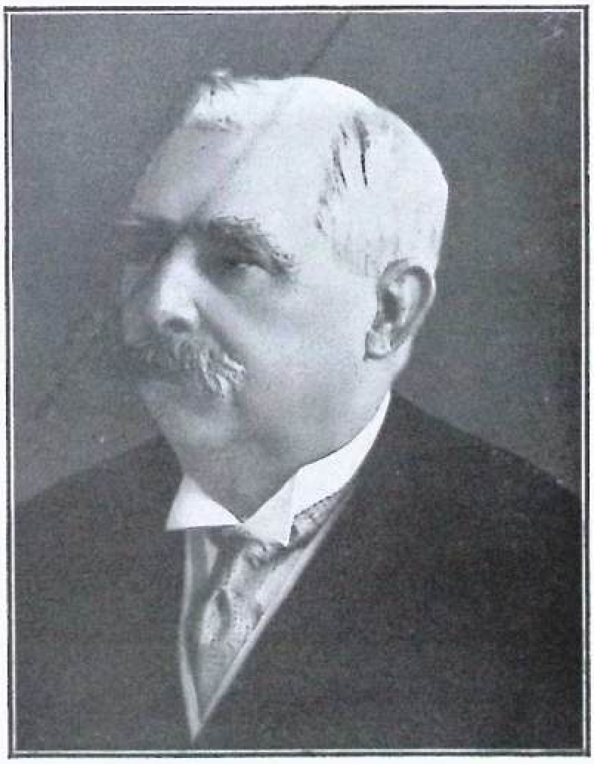
SIR LEE AH YAIN, Barrister-at-Law
President, 1925



Mr. M. M. OHN GHINE
President, 1928



Mr. E. M. PATAIL, Barrister-at-Law
President, 1926



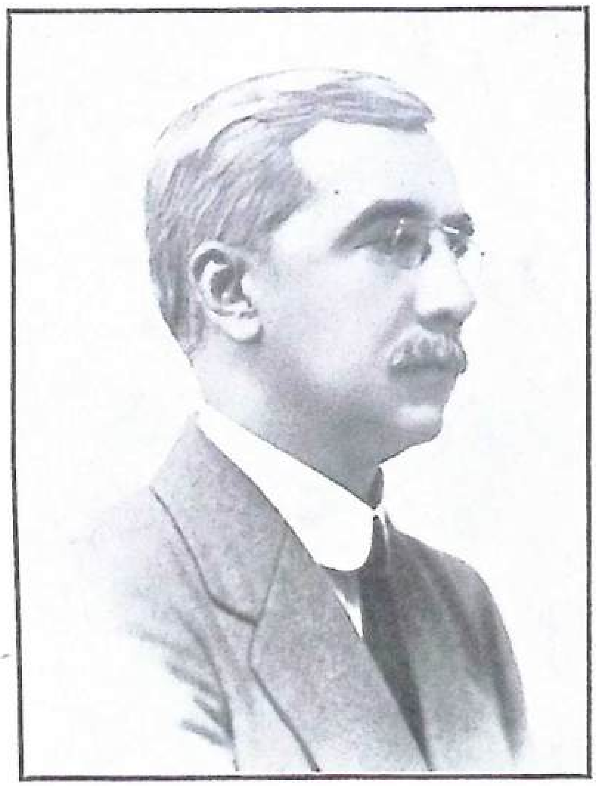
Captain R. B. RUSHALL, M.B.E.
President, 1930



Mr. J. K. MUNSHI, Barrister-at-Law
Mayor, 1934



U BA GLAY
Mayor, 1938



Dr. A. M. MURRAY
President, 1922
Mayor, 1937



U SET, C.I.E., LL.D., I A. & A.S.
Municipal Commissioner
From 1930

Foreign imports fell from a value of Rs. 1567,76,000 to Rs. 1034,19,000, and foreign exports from Rs. 1733,51,000 to Rs. 1292,94,000. The receipts of the Port Trust declined from nearly fifty-two lakhs of rupees to just over forty-five lakhs. The rice trade suffered particularly from the closing of the German market and the shutting down of the many German and Austrian commercial houses of Rangoon; the trade in teak, of which Germany had been the second largest purchaser, likewise suffered severely. And in general the dislocation of trade and the shortage of tonnage produced a marked decline in the import and export of all commodities. The German and Austrian firms were not the only sufferers: foreign mercantile ventures generally were in a difficult position and found it necessary to restrict their activities. Thus the Dutch firm, The Trading Company (formerly Hegt & Co.), closed their large rice-mill since foreign ownership of such concerns in war-time was not viewed by favour by the authorities.

The war was also responsible for the compulsory closing of the German Club.

The demand for timber and other materials such as wolfram needed by the Munitions Board did have, after a time, a slight stimulating effect on commerce; and the rice-trade began to recover when the Liquidator of Hostile Firms disposed of the German rice-mills to English companies. Thus the Anglo-Burma Rice Company was formed in 1917 to take over the properties of the long-established firm of Mohr Brothers; while Messrs. Steel formed the Burma Company to work mills formerly owned by the Burma Rice and Trading Company which had been formed in 1907 out of the old firm of Kruger & Co. So in the year 1917-18 exports to foreign ports had risen again to a value of Rs. 1679,56,000. But foreign imports had further declined to a value of Rs. 974,62,000. It is significant that though in that year, 1917-18, the number of vessels entering the port from foreign lands had increased to 382, their total tonnage was only 751,798 tons; for the war and the resultant shortage of tonnage had brought the small ship into its own again. One interesting effect was that sailing craft were again in demand; in 1913-14 no sailing craft from foreign ports entered, but in 1917-18 there entered 19 such vessels of total tonnage 17,119 tons, while in the coastal trade the number of sailing-craft in the same years grew from 118 of 9,655 tons to 202 of 13,583 tons. In consequence there was a temporary revival of the ship-building industry in Rangoon where, as also at Moulmein, Burmese carpenters once more employed themselves in constructing wooden ships.

The war also produced a certain amount of political disturbance. Enemy agents working through Siam had some success in weakening the allegiance of the Indian unit stationed in Rangoon, and there was some fear of open mutiny which fortunately was averted. In 1915 a number of inhabitants of Rangoon were deported to Kyaukpyu, and for a time thereafter conditions were quiet; but again in 1918 the strain of the war, and in particular the economic distress arising from the continued rise of prices of foodstuffs, produced a good deal

of unrest, which expressed itself in a serious increase in the incidence of crime, and also in a strike of shipping coolies in August of that year; but the strike was terminated by a grant of a 25% increase in wages and by a threat to deport some of the coolie maistris. Another effect of the war was the serious outbreak of influenza which marked the years 1918 and 1919. This disease first became severe in October 1918, and the outbreak assumed such dimensions that the Hospital was unable to accommodate the patients who sought admission. Two temporary hospitals were opened, in Park Road and in Sparks Street, but in 1918 alone the epidemic caused the death of 3,799 people, although free medicine was distributed at all the public vaccination centres. Schools were closed and business was for a time dislocated. In 1919 again, 3,336 deaths from influenza were reported.

The termination of the war enabled trade to revive; and in 1920-21 the foreign shipping had risen to 318 ships of total tonnage 977,100 tons, and the coastal shipping to 1,381 vessels of 2,091,517 tons. The value of imports had risen to Rs. 4473,90,000, and of exports to Rs. 4574,54,000. The re-establishment of comparatively normal conditions had its effect in the appearance of new commercial establishments in the city; thus in 1922 Messrs. Cox & Co. opened a branch of their bank, which was taken over by Lloyd's Bank in 1924; and in 1930 the East Asiatic Company of Denmark, which had been established over thirty years in Siam, opened a branch in Rangoon.

Rangoon, however, in common with the rest of the world, felt the economic depression which commenced towards the end of the third decade of the century; and its effects can be seen in the failure of a number of old-established firms, such as that of Messrs. Bulloch Bros., and, more dramatically, in the riots of 1930. Indian labour, according to the Census of 1931, constituted fifty-six per cent of the craftsmen and no less than eighty-eight per cent of the unskilled and semi-skilled labourers of Rangoon; and the effect of this position was that when employment became limited the Burmese worker felt severely the competition with which he was faced, and racial antagonism developed. This was seen clearly enough in 1930. For many years the stevedore labour of the port had been monopolised by the immigrant coolies, of whom some 2,000 were in employ; but in May 1930 a combination of circumstances led to the employment of a large number of Burmans. The political situation was at the time uneasy, and feeling ran high when on the 5th May news was received of the arrest in India of Mr. M. K. Gandhi. Excitement was intensified by a severe earthquake which affected the city shortly before 8-30 p.m. on the same day. The earthquake, though much less serious in its effects in Rangoon than it was in other parts of the province, was nevertheless sufficiently alarming; over one hundred and fifty persons were badly injured, and forty-six were killed in the collapsing buildings, thirteen being buried by the débris in one house alone. On the following day there was a general stoppage of work on the loading and unloading of ships, due partly to the political circumstance, partly to the excitement

caused by the earthquake. The striking coolies refused to return to work unless an increased rate of pay were granted, and for several days the port was idle. On the 14th of the month a stevedore called in Burmese labour, as had been done in not dissimilar circumstances in 1924, and this example was generally followed, so that by the 22nd of the month there were about 2,000 Burmans employed in work previously carried out by Indians. The precise course of events following this is not easy to determine; but it is certain that on the 26th May fighting began between Burman and Indian coolies, and grew into a serious communal riot which did not cease until the troops were called out four days later. Many deaths occurred during the rioting; the official report placed the number of fatalities at 120, but in some quarters this was regarded as an under-estimate. During this period of four days the life of the city was held up; and public health was endangered because the conservancy work was suspended, the Indian conservancy coolies having gone into hiding. Scandalous to relate, although at least 120 deaths occurred, not a man was convicted, not a man was even brought to trial, for his part in this affair: such was the complete breakdown of the system of law and order.

A further communal riot occurred in the following January, when rioting began between Burmans and Chinese; between the 2nd and the 5th of the month, twelve people were killed and eighty-eight injured. This affair apparently originated in the tense atmosphere arising from the rebellion in Tharrawaddy which had recently begun.

Despite riots, and despite the more serious set-backs of the war of 1914-1919 and the economic difficulties pursuant on it, the trade of Rangoon has on the whole continued to flourish. In 1931-32, at the depth of the depression, the number of ships from foreign ports which entered the harbour was 368 of total tonnage 1,184,533 tons; and coastal vessels numbered 1,475 of 3,394,733 tons. The value of all imports in that year amounted to Rs. 2090,24,000, and of exports to Rs. 3728,92,000, constituting nearly 85 per cent of the total trade of the whole province.

In regard to the government of this important city, it does not appear that the interest of the inhabitants in municipal affairs underwent any great development during the early years of the century. In the general municipal elections of 1902 there was no contest in the case of the Burmese and Muslim constituencies; in 1904 the European seats were the only ones contested; in 1906 even the Europeans returned only four out of the five possible representatives; in 1908, the Chinese, Muslim, and two of the five Burmese members were returned unopposed; again in 1910 there was no contest in two of the Burmese wards and no contest in the Chinese constituency; in 1912 the Burmese, Chinese, and Hindu seats were not contested. Slightly more interest was, however, displayed thereafter, although again in 1918 one of the Burmese candidates was returned unopposed.

Despite this somewhat lukewarm enthusiasm on the part of the electorate, circumstances were tending towards a greater degree of municipal autonomy. The policy of the Government of India led in that direction, and apart from that, the limitations imposed by the Act of 1898 upon the authority of the Municipal Committee became more and more unsatisfactory as the city grew. On more than one occasion it was found necessary to amend the Act or the rules issued under it. Thus in 1908 the powers relating to assessments, pawnshops, dog-registration, and other minor matters were amended; in 1911 an amending Act varied the powers relating to pensions of servants, and to inspection of premises: in 1914 the term of office of Committee members was extended to three years; and in the same year the electoral qualification was raised to a rental of Rs. 20 per mensem and in 1916 to Rs. 25 per mensem. But wider reforms than these were needed, for the whole structure of municipal government was archaic. In 1911 the Municipal Committee made representations to the provincial government pointing out the inadequacy of the Act of 1898 and asking for the regulation of municipal administration in Rangoon by a special act. In reply Government invited the Committee to submit a draft bill which would meet their needs, and, mainly owing to the efforts of one of the members, Mr. P. P. Ginwala, a draft was produced which would organise the administration on the lines of the Bombay municipal system. After the draft bill had been formulated in 1915, Mr. Gavin Scott, then Deputy Commissioner of the Hanthawaddy District, was deputed to visit Bombay and examine the actual working of the system, and Mr. C. C. Cameron, Secretary to the Municipality, was subsequently sent to both Bombay and Calcutta for the same purpose. Further stimulus to reform was given by the Resolution of the Government of India dated the 16th May 1918, in which it was affirmed that the general policy of the Indian Government was "one of the gradual removal of unnecessary Government control and of differentiating the spheres of action appropriate for Government and for local bodies respectively. . . . .The control of Government over local bodies is at present exercised both from within and from without, and it is mainly by the substitution of outside for inside control and by the reduction of outside control, so far as is compatible with safety, that progress in the desired direction will be achieved."

A bill was introduced into the Burma Legislative Council in 1920 for the reframing of the municipal administration of Rangoon; but on detailed examination of it, the Municipal Committee came to the conclusion that it retained unnecessary and undesirable restrictions on the Municipality's authority. The principal ground of objection was that, as a corollary to the creation of an elective Presidentship, the bill proposed to establish as the executive officer of the Municipality a Commissioner appointed by the provincial government with statutory powers so extensive that he would be in effect an independent authority over whom the Municipality would have no control. It was further proposed in the bill that only one standing committee

should be constituted, and the effect of this provision would be, it was affirmed, that three-fifths of the Municipality's members would have nothing to do, while the members of the solitary standing committee would be overburdened. A proposal that Government should hold direct communication with the officers of the Municipality and issue orders direct to them was found to be equally objectionable. A resolution was therefore carried in the Committee to the effect that "the City of Rangoon Municipal Bill, as it stands, robs the Corporation of all real control, and with the reduction of its Committees to one Standing Committee also robs the majority of its members of all interest in Municipal affairs." A further resolution stated that "the system of Municipal Government which the Rangoon Municipal Bill as introduced in the Burma Legislative Council proposes to establish in Rangoon is in certain vital respects retrograde as compared with the existing system which it proposes to replace and fundamentally opposed to the declared policy of the Government of India as announced in their Resolution on Local Self-Government dated the 16th of May 1918, that it is in conflict with the public opinion of the present day and with the trend of the times, and that it will neither constitute a substantial advance towards the gradual realisation of complete Local Self-Government nor stimulate in the average citizen that sense of responsibility by which the rate of progress is accelerated." It was therefore demanded that in general the ultimate power in administration should lie with the Municipality and that in particular the Municipality should have some voice in the appointment of the Commissioner. The discussion appears to have aroused a degree of interest unusual in municipal affairs and a public meeting was held in the Jubilee Hall in October 1920 to consider the matter. This meeting endorsed the views of the Committee, except that it was resolved that the Commissioner ought to be actually appointed by the Municipality subject to the approval of Government[1].

In consequence of these representations the bill was redrafted and in its new form was duly passed and came into operation on the 1st August 1922, replacing for Rangoon the Act of 1898 and its amending acts, the Water Works Act 1884, and the Sewage Act 1920. The new Act of 1922 entrusted authority over all branches of municipal administration to a Municipal Corporation which was to consist of not more than forty members of whom at least three-fourths were to be elected by the rate-payers under such rules as were prescribed in the schedule to the Act. The term of office of councillors was fixed at three years, and the usual disqualifications, in the event of such misfortunes as bankruptcy or imprisonment for six months, were imposed. The Presidentship was made elective, for a term of one year. The executive authority formerly vested in the President was conferred on the newly-created Commissioner, who was given the right of speaking, though not of voting, at all meetings of the Corporation and its subsidiary bodies. The Commissioner

[1] *Annual Report on the Working of the Rangoon Municipality*, 1920-21.

was to be appointed by the Corporation under such conditions as the Corporation might prescribe, except that if he were a servant of Government these conditions should be made by agreement between Government and the Corporation. In view of his responsible position, however, the Commissioner, whether a servant of Government or not, might not be removed from his office without Government's sanction, and this restriction was imposed in the case of the other principal municipal employees also, such as the Chief Engineer, the Health Officer, and the Secretary.

Under a schedule annexed to the Act, it was provided that the Corporation should consist of thirty-four councillors, ten elected by the Burmese community, five by the European, Anglo-Indian, Armenian, Jew, and Parsi community, four by the Muslim community, four by the Hindu community, two by the Chinese community, one by the Port Commissioners, one by the Burma Chamber of Commerce, one by the Trades Association, one by the Development Trust, and five nominated by the provincial government. These provisions might be varied by the provincial government on the application of not less than three-fifths of the councillors, provided that the representation of no community might be reduced. The municipal franchise was granted to any person of the age of twenty-one years who owned or rented property in the municipal limits of taxable value at least fifteen rupees a month, or who was partner in or manager of a business occupying property of taxable value at least one hundred rupees a month, or who was an officer authorised to represent a company, or who was a lodger paying not less than thirty rupees a month. An elected councillor was required to be able to read, write, and speak English; and no person might stand as candidate for election unless his name was on the register of electors for his community, and unless he owned land or a building in the city of taxable value at least one hundred rupees a month, or rented alone or in partnership a building or part of a building in the city of taxable value not less than one hundred and fifty rupees a month, or was a lodger paying not less than one hundred and fifty rupees a month, or was a graduate, barrister, pleader or other professionally qualified person of more than five years' standing, or was an officer duly authorised to represent a company. The effect of these provisions was to enfranchise approximately ten per cent of the population[1].

Under Section 6 of the Act the Corporation constituted four standing committees, *viz.*, for Finance; Roads and Building; Water and Sewage; and Public Health and Markets: and under Section 5 was established the Education Board, replacing the Rangoon School Board which had been constituted

[1] In 1931 when the Census population was 400,415, the number of voters on the register was 40,253. The distribution of voters by communities was—

European and Allied Communities	5,537
Burmese	12,332
Hindu	10,440
Muslim	7,425
Chinese	4,519

in 1917 in place of the Educational Syndicate for the management of vernacular education. The Education Board was to consist of six councillors appointed by the Corporation, four members co-opted by the six councillors, and two members nominated by Government.

In view of his services towards the establishment of the new Corporation, Mr. Ginwala was elected its first President.

The final step in enhancing the dignity of the municipal administration and in establishing the position of Rangoon as a self-governing city was taken in 1934 when by Act III of that year the title of President was replaced by that of Mayor.

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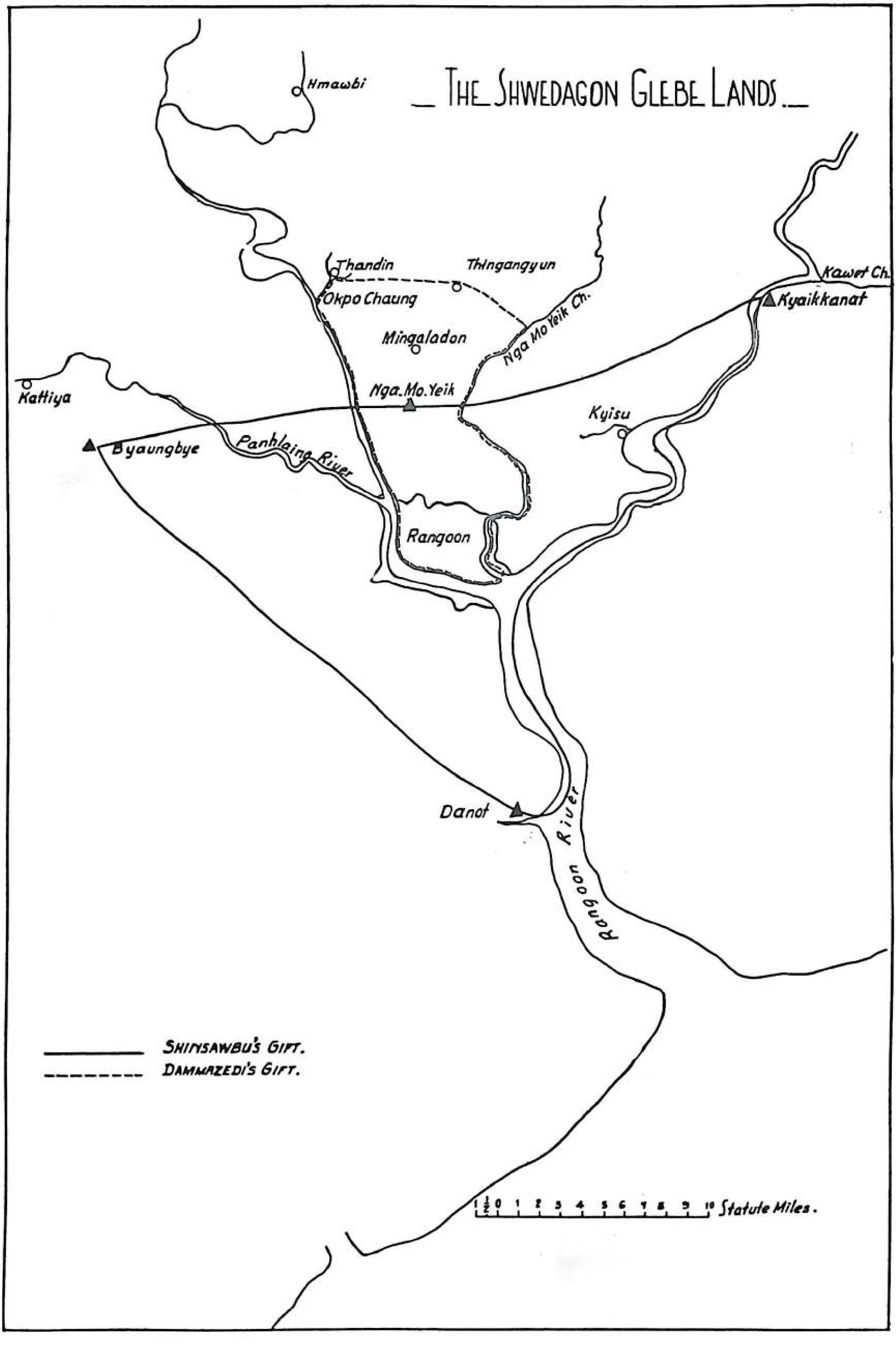
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PLAN No. 5.


THE SHWEDAGON GLEBE LANDS
Hmawbi
Thandin
Thingangyun
Okpo Chaung
Nga Mo Yeik Ch.
Kawet Ch.
Kyaikkanat
Mingaladon
Kattiya
Nga. Mo. Yeik
Kyisu
Byaungbye
Panhlaing River
Rangoon
Danot
Rangoon River
SHINSAWBU'S GIFT.
DAMMAZEDI'S GIFT.
1/2 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Statute Miles.

APPENDIX A. The Glebe Lands of the Shwe Dagon.

(I)

The boundaries of the glebe lands which Shin Sawbu dedicated to the Pagoda are stated in the *History of Syriam* to have been—

(i) on the east, Kyaikkanat Pagoda,
(ii) on the south, Danok (Danot) Pagoda,
(iii) on the west, Pyaung Bya Pagoda, and
(iv) on the north, Moyeik Modaw Pagoda.

(i) Kyaikkanat is on the east bank of the Pegu River, somewhat below the confluence of the Kawet Chaung.

(ii) Danot is on the west bank of the Rangoon River about half-way from the city to the sea.

(iii) Pyaung Bya is probably Pyaung Bye, four or five miles south-east of Kattiya on the Panhlaing River.

(iv) Moyeik Modaw is probably the Nga Mo Yeik Pagoda, situated at the 9th Mile on the Rangoon-Prome Road.

Probably the eastern boundary from Kyaikkanat to Danot ran along the Pegu and Rangoon Rivers.

(II)

The boundaries of the glebe lands after Dammazedi's expropriation are stated in the *History of Syriam* to have been—

(i) on the north-east, Thit Thin Kan hill,
(ii) on the east, the Nga Mo Yeik Chaung,
(iii) on the south-east, the Pan Alwe Chaung and the mouth of the Nga Mo Yeik,
(iv) on the south, the Tonbo landing-place,
(v) on the south-west, the Kangyi watch-post,
(vi) on the west, the Kemmendine watch-post and the mouth of the Inwa Bauk Chaung,
(vii) on the north-west, the mouth of the Hmawbi Chaung, and
(viii) on the north, from Nga Than Tin village to the Yongalauk Chaung.

(i) Thit Thin Kan would appear to be Thingan (gyun), lying somewhat east of the wireless station north of Mingaladon.

(ii) Nga Mo Yeik is the Pazundaung Creek.

(iii) Pan Alwe is the Hlaing or Rangoon River.

(iv) Tonbo is not identified, but must have been in the neighbourhood of Rangoon, as must also

(v) the Kangyi watch-post.

(vi) Inwa Bauk, or "Ava Bok" as it was anglicised, is the mouth of the Panhlaing River.

(vii) Hmawbi Chaung can hardly be the modern chaung.

(viii) Nga Than Tin is probably Thandin on the Okpo Chaung, and Yongalauk is probably the Kalaukkundaing Chaung, running between the wireless station and Thingangyun.

It is probable that the Hmawbi Chaung referred to is the Okpo Chaung (see viii), which would have been approximately the southern boundary of Hmawbi Township where it abutted on Mingaladon Township.

Accepting, with some hesitation, the numerous presumptions given above, one may conclude that since the reduced limits of the glebe lands extended as far northwards as Thandin and Thingangyun, then Dammazedi, while depriving the Pagoda of much land on the east, south and west, extended its territories on the north, while reducing the area in total.

The limits of the gifts of the two monarchs, as presumed above, are represented on the attached map.

(III)

It is apparent that if the statements of the *History of Syriam* are accurate, the Pagoda must have owned a vast area of land, but it is curious that in the *Shwe Dagon Inscriptions* which Dammazedi caused to be erected, no mention is made of the gift of lands by Shin Sawbu or of Dammazedi's revision of the gift, although their other works in connection with the Pagoda are clearly stated; nor would it seem from the appearance of the stones that any mention of such gift has disappeared through defacement; nor is the matter mentioned in, e. g., the Mon *History of Kings*. This circumstance would appear to cast doubt upon the accuracy of the statements in the *History of Syriam*, the extant copy of which, moreover, dates from 1844 and may therefore have been embellished with efforts of the imagination. On the other hand, Dammazedi may have been reluctant to make a permanent record of his expropriation of Pagoda lands. More than this, colour is lent to the *History's* account by the *Hanthawaddy Sittans* of 1164 B.E. (1802 A.D.). The *Record of Ma U Township* shows that the boundary thereof was "on the south, the south bank of the Mikokyisu stream bordering on the land Syriam; on the south-west it borders on the glebe lands of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda; on the west it borders on the lands of Paunglin so far as the Malit stream". Mikokyisu is probably Kyisu of today, the village of which name stands on the Pegu River about twelve miles due north-east of Monkey Point; Malit village is on the Pazundaung Creek about ten miles north-north-west from Kyisu. We find further that the boundary of Paunglin Township was "on the south-east Malit village on the east bank of the Nga Mo Yeik stream bordering on the Ma U Township; on the south along the Nga Mo Yeik stream from Tantabin village to the mouth of Bala stream bordering on

Dawbon". It would thus appear that the two townships were contiguous in the neighbourhood of the Nga Mo Yeik, and that in the case of Ma U where the contiguity with Paunglin ceased, contiguity with the glebe lands began. As the common border of the two Townships was the Nga Mo Yeik, it is apparent that the glebe lands extended as far as that Chaung. The evidence of the *sittans* is unimpeachable, and there can be no doubt that in 1802 A.D. the glebe lands of the Shwe Dagon had as their eastern limit something very much like, if not identical with, the limits which are deduced above from the *History of Syriam*. That being so, it may well be that the other limits deduced from the *History* are also correct, and that in former days the whole of modern Rangoon and a good deal more also to the north of the city were the property of the Pagoda. No evidence available in respect of the later eighteenth century indicates that the town of Rangoon itself was in those days part of the glebe land, and it is therefore probable that Alaungpaya expropriated that part of the property.

In 1852 all land became the property of Government, and any legal claim on the part of the Pagoda was therefore terminated.

APPENDIX B: Shipping at Rangoon in 1803 and 1838.

(a) Arrivals and Departures 1st January to 14th July 1803.

ARRIVALS.

Name	Description.	Commander	Date of arrival	Port of departure	Tonnage	Cargo
Regina	Brig	Hegino	Jan. 1	Calcutta	400	
Don	Grab	Stewart	Jan. 26	Penang		
Lady Leith	Brig	Turnbull	Jan. 28	Penang		
Commerce	Ship	Eaton	Feb. 6	Madras	400	
Myrtle	Brig	Cook	Feb. 11	Bengal		
Sophia	Ship	Robertson	Feb. 25	Penang		
Alexander	Ship	James	Feb. 26	Madras		
Holstein	Ship	Fulton	Feb. 26	Madras		
Daniel	Ship	Mackay	March 21	Calcutta		
Lizard	Brig	Purser	April 8	Calcutta		
Regina	Brig	Francisco Lopez	April 27	Madras		
Lady Leith	Brig	Turnbull	May 11	Penang		
Minerva	Ship	Abdulla Bernoojee	May 11	Muscat & Calcutta		
Henry Addington	Ship	Robertson	May 31	Calcutta	300	Piece-goods, tin, steel, rice.
Don	Grab	Stewart	May 31	Penang	400	China goods & ballast.
Diana	Brig	Holmes	June 8	Bombay & Nicobars	250	Coconuts & ballast.
Munnurchy	Sloop	Browne	June 8	Madras	50	Coast-goods & ballast.
Commerce	Ship	Eaton	June 13	Madras, Nicobars & Penang	400	Coconuts.
Regina	Sloop	Francisco Lopez	June 14	Coast of Tavoy		Dorians & ballast.
Tuez Subbanny	Ship	Alis Mohis	June 24	Madras	400	Coast-goods, coconuts & ballast

DEPARTURES.

Name	Description.	Commander	Date of Departure.		Destination.
—	Longboat	Cook	Jan.	6	Calcutta
Peggy	Ship	Chauvette	Jan.	14	Madras
Mornington	Ship	Frost	Jan.	22	Calcutta
Industry	Brig	Roberts	Jan.	24	Madras
(belonging to a Moorman)	Ship	Price	Jan.	25	Madras
Pearl	Ship	Mackenzie	Jan.	28	Madras
St. George	Ship	Browne	March	1	Madras
Rangoon Law	Ship	George	March	11	Calcutta
Lady Leith	Brig	Turnbull	March	24	Penang
Commerce	Ship	Eaton	March	27	Madras
Hector	Ship	Sinclair	March	29	Madras
Sultan	Ship	Court	March	29	Penang
Pomona	Ship	Wiltshire	April	28	Madras
Lizard	Brig	Purser	April	18	Penang
Holstein	Ship	Fulton	May	5	Madras
Alexander	Ship	James	May	5	Madras
Sophia	Ship	Robertson	May	7	Calcutta
Lady Leith	Brig	Turnbull	June	9	Penang
Henry Addington	Ship	Robertson	July	14	Calcutta

(*Bengal Secret Consultations*, 20th June, 1805).

(b) *List of Vessels trading regularly to Rangoon, 1838*

Name	Flag	Tonnage	Description	Where built	Owner.
Sarah	British	201	Brig	Moulmein	Wm. Roy
Thistle	,,	35	Schooner	Rangoon	,,
John Hepburne	,,	90	,,	,,	Wm. Speirs
Ayrshire	,,	270	Barque	,,	,,
Colonel Burney	,,	203	,,	,,	Trill & Crisp
Pyen Boung	,,	132	Brig	,,	,,
Original	,,	18	Schooner	,,	,,
Elizabeth	,,	144	Brig	,,	Sarkies Manook
Shwi Oodoung	,,	200	,,	Bassein	,,
Flora McDonald	,,	60	Schooner	Rangoon	David Staig
Margaret	,,	65	,,	,,	,,
Mary	,,	80	,,	,,	Cowasjee Byramjee
Robert Spankie	,,	92	Brig	Calcutta	ComajeeShapoonja
Louisa	,,	42	Schooner	,,	Hazlewood
Catharine	,,	35	,,	Chittagong	T. Daniels
Bassein Merchant	,,	50	,,	Rangoon	McCalder
Wave	,,	30	,,	Moulmein	Moola Cossim
Susan	,,	38	,,	Singapore	G. C. Gabriel
Brilliant	,,	40	,,	Calcutta	S. Questa
Hawk	,,	55	,,	Moulmein	Morsajee Byrape
Shwetha	,,	150	,,	,,	Moola Hassen
Cawdor Bux	Native	150	Brig	Coringa	Cowdar Bux
Charlotte	British	65	,,	Chittagong	,,
Gophul Bux	Native	220	,,	Coringa	,,
Seeveramloo	,,	300	,,	,,	,,
Phaeton	British	38	Schooner	Calcutta	Cossim Patel
Caringa Packet	,,	260	Brig	Coringa	
Phyool Kurrem	Native	250	,,	,,	
Meera Madet	,,	250	,,	,,	
Nasamboo	,,	250	,,	,,	
Istree Ramaloo	,,	250	,,	,,	
Coopa Suba Raido	,,	250	,,	,,	
Patoo Tattia	,,	250	,,	,,	
M. Abdool Cowdar	,,	250	,,	,,	
Akool Mustama	,,	250	,,	,,	
Patboo Ravamab	,,	250	,,	,,	
Booram Saib	,,	250	,,	,,	
Aptoo Moode Balia	,,	250	,,	,,	

Note: "Most of these native names are those of the owner or Nacoda of the vessel. Their tonnage is not exactly known but it varies from 200 to 300 tons so that I have chosen 250 as an average."

(*Bengal Secret Consultations*, 23rd January, 1839).

APPENDIX C: The Crisp Family.

There were several members of the family of Crisp in Burma during the first half of the nineteenth century. The head of the family was May Flower Crisp, who was born in England in December 1788 and became a sailor. For some years he was an impressed seaman on a naval vessel during the French Wars, and after the conclusion of the Wars he came to India as ship's captain and ultimately set up as a merchant in Burma. He had evidently traded to Rangoon before 1824, as in November 1823 he conveyed information to the Government at Calcutta about conditions in Rangoon, and in 1824 was employed as pilot by the expeditionary force. After the first Anglo-Burmese War, he entered into partnership with R. J. Trill, so forming the firm of Trill and Crisp, dealers in timber and cotton piece-goods. Trill apparently survived till about 1840, and on his death the firm became the firm of Crisp & Co. Crisp was joined by his son, Charles Malcolm Crisp, who came out from England in charge of one of his father's ships, and then settled down in Burma. Two of the elder Crisp's brothers, Joseph and William, were also commanders of ships and made periodic visits to Rangoon.

M. F. Crisp was a man of active mind. While in Moulmein during his exile from Burma proper, he formulated somewhat novel views on politics; a strictly religious man who was, what was rare in those days, a teetotaller, he held that religion should be the basis of government; he was also an advocate of the elective principle in the making of official appointments, and would have applied adult suffrage, not merely male suffrage, to this purpose.

The firm was hard hit by the war of 1852; their buildings in Rangoon had been destroyed and their property confiscated, and the Governor-General's refusal to permit any compensation (see above page 180) left the firm in a bad way. Crisp went to England and induced a Member of Parliament to take up his grievances, but without avail. He returned to Burma and died in Moulmein in 1866. Some years before his death he published locally a pamphlet attacking the economic policy of the Government of British Burma.

His son, C. M. Crisp, born in England on 14th February 1814, predeceased his father. He died on the 20th May 1862, and was buried in the Pazundaung Cemetery. He held the post of Assessor of Income-tax as well as that of Postmaster. For other sons of M. F. Crisp, see above page 253.

A number of members of the Crisp family and others connected with them were buried in the old English cemetery, whose site in now marked by a memorial in 33rd Street, a little south of Montgomerie Street, The memorial bears the following inscription:

SACRED

TO THE MEMORY

OF

Sarah Crisp born on the 22nd February 1842
And died on the 28th February 1842 Rangoon.
Susan Eliza Crisp born on the 12th May 1848
And died on the 12th July 1852 Rangoon.
Josephine Crisp born on the 22nd December 1849
And died on the 17th April 1851 Rangoon.
William Crisp born on the 22nd February 1854
And died on the 28th February 1854.
Malcolm Crisp son of the late Capt. May Flower Crisp
Died in 1840 age seven years.
Capt. William Crisp died in Rangoon age about 50 years.
Capt. Bidan died in Rangoon age about 55 years.
Mr. Hugh Speirs died in Rangoon age about 60 years.
A Chief Officer of one of Messrs. Crisp & Co's. vessels
Died in Rangoon age about 40 years.
Mr. Trill of Messrs. Trill Crisp & Co.
Died in Rangoon age about 50 years.
Captain Brown and Mr. Brown Postmaster.
Mr. Speirs Mate of the Navy.

This Monument has been erected in memory of the persons above named who are buried in 33rd Street Block E3 Rangoon, where now stands a memorial lamppost with their names recorded thereon.

* * * *

Of the children named, *Sarah, Susan Eliza, Josephine*, and *William*, were the children of C. M. Crisp, who also had three other children whose births are recorded in the registers of the Cantonment Church, *viz. Julia Primrose*, born 6th August 1852, *Godwin William*, born 5th February 1855, and *Edwin Henry*, born 6th June 1856.

Malcolm Crisp, who is shown on the memorial as the son of May Flower Crisp, is said to have been actually the son of either Joseph or William Crisp, and therefore the nephew of M. F. Crisp.

Captain William Crisp, is doubtless one of these brothers of May Flower Crisp.

There was another member of the family in Rangoon also, known as *Captain Crisp Junior*, a cousin of C. M. Crisp, and for a time a commander of one of the firm's vessels. After the war of 1852 he became a pilot, and the Cantonment Church registers show the birth on the 2nd June 1861 of *Amy Florence, daughter of William Crisp, Pilot, and Hosannah Crisp.*

Mr. Trill, the date of whose death is not specified on the memorial, was possibly R. J. Trill, the senior partner of the firm, who was made a prisoner by

the Burmese in 1824 (see above page 113). "Mr. Trill" is referred to in an official document of the year 1839, but the absence of subsequent reference suggests that he must have died shortly after that date. The firm of Trill is referred to by Symes in his account of his mission to Burma in 1802; thus unless some elder member of the family of Trill was in Rangoon in 1802, Trill must at his death have been considerably older than the fifty years with which the Memorial credits him. Possibly the Memorial refers to G. R. Trill, however (see page 136).

Mr. Speirs Mate of the Navy was William Speirs or Spiers or Spears, half-pay naval lieutenant, merchant of Rangoon, who owned a pukka house and godown which were destroyed in 1852. He made a claim for Rs. 10,000 compensation. He should not be confused with Thomas Spears, Phayre's correspondent at the Burmese Court. (see above page 136 sqq.).

Mr. Hugh Speirs was possibly a connection of William Speirs. He is referred to in accounts of the period as "a British merchant from Umarapoora."

Captain Brown may have been the Captain Brown who commanded the *Ayrshire*, a ship built at Rangoon by Lieutenant Speirs.

Mr. Brown Postmaster was John Brown (see above page 148).

For *Captain Bidan*, see above pages 135, 146.

The identity of the *Chief Officer of one of Messrs. Crisp and Co's vessels* remains unknown.

There are certain peculiarities about the memorial. It is odd that though the Cantonment Chaplain was able to record the birth of Julia Primrose Crisp which occurred in 1852, yet he made no entry of the death of Susan Eliza which also occured in 1852, and, still more notably, no entry of the birth and death of William which took place as late as February 1854 by which date the registers were being regularly kept.

The coincidence of the dates of birth and death of Sarah and William, both of whom are given as being born on the 22nd February and having died on the 28th February in 1842 and 1854 respectively, is also remarkable.

All these circumstances, together with the absence of details about some of the deaths recorded and the error in the parentage of Malcolm Crisp, tend to cast a measure of doubt on the accuracy of the information given in the Memorial. The Memorial was evidently erected some considerable time after the deaths which it records, for the reference to M. F. Crisp as "the late" Captain Crisp shows that it was not erected till after his death in 1866; thus the dates were entered from memory of fairly remote events. While there is no reason to doubt that the burials occurred, the dates given must be accepted with caution.

The 33rd Street memorial is reproduced almost verbatim on a plaque in the Pazundaung Cemetery; there is no variation at all in the wording except that the last two or three lines, consisting of the words "who are buried in 33rd Street, etc.," have been omitted. It is improbable that the remains of

those whose deaths are so recorded were removed to Pazundaung, for the 33rd Street Memorial clearly states that they "are buried" there, while the Memorial in the cemetery omits any reference to actual burial. It is more probable that the Memorial was placed in the cemetery for the sake of vicinity to the grave of Charles Malcolm Crisp which is close by.

Note: The information about the relationship of the various members of the Crisp family has been kindly supplied by Mr. E. J. Dunkley and Mr. A. B. Crisp. Other information is derived from a variety of sources, including the India Office records, Bennett's *Rangoon Fifty Years Ago*, Grant's *Rough Pencillings of a Rough Trip*, and the Tenasserim records.

APPENDIX D: European Cemeteries in Rangoon.

In addition to the original English cemetery which was built over after 1852 (see Appendix C: The Crisp Family), there are in Rangoon other old European burial-grounds, now disused, which are of some interest: while in two of the cemeteries still in use there are some noteworthy tombs.

I. At the Botataung Pagoda there is a burial-ground where are memorials to a number of officers and men, mostly of the Navy, who perished during or shortly after the war of 1852.

(*a*) The following are buried there—

A. F. Oakes, Madras Artillery, 12th April 1852 (see above p. 172).
James Ambrose, Shipbuilder, 22nd June 1852*
Joseph Gilbert, Royal Marines, H.M.S. *Winchester* 9th October 1852.
Henry Lawsham, Royal Marines, H.M.S. *Winchester*, 27th October 1852.
James Page, Quartermaster, H.M.S. *Winchester*, 1st November 1852.
Thomas Lowe, Petty Officer, H.M.S. *Winchester*, 18th November 1852.
William Hill, Carpenter, H.M.S. *Winchester*, 21st November 1852.
Rev. Thomas T. Baker, Chaplain, H.M.S. *Fox*.**
Assistant-Surgeon Frederick Morgan, H.M.S. *Fox*.**

(*b*) The following who fell or were mortally wounded in action or who were drowned while on duty, between the years 1852 and 1855, are buried elsewhere but are recorded at the Pagoda

Lieutenant G. D. B. Kennedy, R. N.
George Mills, Corporal, Royal Marines.
Thomas Christian, Private, Royal Marines.
Edward Shillingford, Private, Royal Marimes.
Charles Hounson, Private, Royal Marines.
William Tucker, Private, Royal Marines.
Henry De Vignolles, Captain of the mizzen-top,
George Woolridge, Boatswain's Mate.
George Mills, A. B.
John Watt, O. S.
Robert McMurdie, Mate, R. N.
Thomas Hillyer, A. B.
James Pitts, O. S.

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* The memorial to Ambrose also records the death of his infant son, J. Compton, at Moulmein, on the 4th June, 1851.

** Baker was author of a well-known book, "*Recent Operations of the British Forces at Rangoon and Martaban*, by the late Revd. Thomas Turner Baker, Chaplain" (1852). The deaths of both Baker and Assistant-Surgeon Morgan are recorded on a memorial lamppost erected by the Municipal Committee on the 14th October, 1895, in the middle of Monkey Point Road opposite the Botataung Pagoda; the inscription on the lamppost states that Baker, Morgan, and four others unknown lie buried at a point thirty feet due south of the lamppost.

Isaac Read, O. S.
Edward Morel.
William Bryce Mason, Lieutenant. *

(*c*) The following who died of disease between April 1852 and July 1853 are similarly recorded.

George Palmer, Paymaster's staff.
William Morgan, captain of the after-gun.
Arthur Whybrow, Boy, 1st Class.
James Fleming, A. B.
John Ford, A. B.
George Coaker, A. B.
Charles Pearce, A. B.
Terence Carmichael, A. B.
William Nixon, A. B.
John Hunter, A. B.
George Whiting, A. B.
William Porter, Sergeant, Royal Marines.
William Rundle, Private, Royal Marines.
William Maltby, Sergeant, Royal Marines.
Mark Moody, Private, Royal Marines.
Issac Phillip, Sergeant, Royal Marines.
Edward Wady, Private, Royal Marines.
Henry Whyte, Private, Royal Marines.
George Beazley, Private, Royal Marines.
George Wine, Quartermaster.
William Sobee, O. S.
Charles H. Bath, Private, Royal Marines.
Charles Baggs, O. S.

II. The following were buried at the Shwe Dagon Pagoda—

Lieutenant Robert Doran, H. M. 18th Royal Irish, who fell at the taking of the Pagoda on the 14th April 1852; and

Captain Granville Gower Loch, R.N., H. M. S. *Winchester*, who died of wounds on the 6th February, 1853.

The remains of these officers were removed to the Cantonment Cemetery after the demilitarisation of the Pagoda platform (see above p. 282).

A Memorial to Lieutenant James Marriott Taylor, 9th Madras N.I., who was killed at Donabyu on the 19th March 1853 and was buried where he fell, was removed from the Shwe Dagon to the Cantonment Cemetery at the same time.

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* Drowned while rendering assistance to the wreck of the steamer *Mouzuffer*.

III. In the compound of St. John's Roman Catholic Church in Maung Tawlay Street is a memorial to Major T. Walker, Madras Army, who was killed on the 5th December 1824, aged 42 years (see above p. 129).

IV. There are a number of graves within the British Infantry lines at the Sale Barracks:

(*a*) within the area of the barracks are buried Lieutenant R. Gundy, 35th Madras N. I., died 18th April 1852; Major R. A. Lochwa, H. M. 80th Regiment, 19th May 1852; and Private James, H. M. 80th Regiment, 16th June 1852.

(*b*) on the slope of the hill to the west of Victoria Avenue is the original Cantonment Cemetery ground where lie

Brevet-Captain Archibald Foul, Madras Horse Artillery, died 27th June 1853.

Lieutenant John Frederick Wing, 1st Madras Fusiliers, died 21st July 1853.

Assistant-Surgeon J. W. Firminger, 19th Madras N. I., died 24th June 1854.

Ensign James Clark, H. M. 51st K.O.L.I., died 15th February 1855.

Lieutenant-Colonel Charles James Coote, 18th Royal Irish, died 24th May 1855.

Robert Bruce Johnstone, of Messrs. Johnstone Barlas & Co., merchant of Rangoon, died 14th December 1855.

(*c*) in this same burial ground are memorials to the following—

Colonel Malcolm McNeil, Madras Light Cavalry, who died of sun-stroke at the taking of Pegu.

Lieutenant Walter Cook, 22nd Madras N.I., died 6th December 1852 of wounds received at Pegu.

Corporal H. Leech,	H. M. 80th Regiment,	12th April 1852.
Private H. Fielding,	do	12th April 1852.
Private J. Taylor,	do	12th June 1852.
Private J. Lawson,	do	13th June 1852.
Private S. Eyre,	do	17th June 1852.
Private T. Walsh,	do	8th May 1852.
Private J. Wade,	do	3rd June 1852.
Private F. Allsop,	do	5th August 1852.
Private A. Fulcher,	do	10th August 1852.
Private J. Dow,	do	15th April 1852.

(*a*) In the Cantonment Cemetery are also some early graves—

Lieutenant John Faircloth, H. M. 84th Regiment, died 4th October 1854.

G. MacCrea, assassinated 25th November 1854.

Mary Reed, wife of Lieutenant-Colonel Reed, 84th Regiment.

Ellen Wyatt, wife of Joseph S. Wyatt, Paymaster-Sergeant, 84th Regiment, died 1st November 1854.

(*b*) There is also in the Cantonment Cemetery almost the oldest English gravestone known in Burma, to the memory of

"Captain John Stewart, for many years a commander in the country service, who departed this life in Rangoon on the 21st Day of August in the year of Our Lord 1808, Born in Scotland. Aged 54 Years."

The inscription is not very clear, and the age might be 34 years, though the expression "for many years" suggests that 54 is correct. He was evidently a merchant-captain, but information about him is lacking. The word "country" has been misread "cavalry" in the official *List of European Burial Grounds in Burma* published in 1922, but a rubbing of the inscription leaves the matter beyond doubt. The stone was in use as a dhobi-stone until it was rescued by the Chaplain and erected in the lych-gate of the Cemetery.

IV. In the Pazundaung Cemetery is a stone to the memory of James Montgomery, Esqre, Shipbuilder, died on the 7th September 1834, aged 63 years and 29 days. This may be the Montgomery referred to by Captain Canning (*Bengal Political and Secret Consultations* 20th June, 1805 No. 20), as being in partnership with a ship-builder named Turner. Montgomery was suspected of a connection with the French. Further information about him is not forthcoming.

Among other interesting tombs at this cemetery is that of Robert Samuel Edwards, Collector of Customs, died 3rd January 1877, aged 76 years (see above p. 188).

APPENDIX E: The Armenian Cemetery.

This cemetery, which stands at the corner of Sule Pagoda Road and Fraser Street, was apparently founded in the early days of Rangoon, perhaps at the same period as the establishment of the Armenian Church. There are twenty-four graves in it, of which only eight bear inscriptions, *viz*.

May 17th 1811, Hyrapiet Mackertoon of Shiraz,
January 11th 1812, Mrs. Ripsy Arratoon,
September 22nd 1814, Petruse Johannes,
August 12th 1817, Arratoon Lazar,
January 10th 1819, Mrs. Elizabeth Petruse,
December 26th 1824, Mrs. Bagoom Sarkies Manook,
June 16th 1830, Manook Petruse,
February 16th 1834, Mrs. K. Carapiet Zachariah.

Arratoon Carapiet Zachariah and Arratoon Lazar Jacob were relatives of the Akaukwun Gregory (see above p. 75) who died in 1788.

(Information kindly supplied by M. H. Vardanian, Esq., Warden, Armenian Church of St. John the Baptist, Rangoon).

APPENDIX F: Names of Presidents and Mayors of the Municipal Committee and Corporation and of Commissioners of the Corporation.

(*i*) MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE.

No.	*Names of Presidents.*	*Tenure of office.*
1.	Capt. R. C. Evanson, I.S.C.	1- 8-1874 to 4- 4-1875
		11- 2-1877 to 10- 9-1881
2.	L. McIver, Esq., M.C.S.	5- 4-1875 to 19- 6-1876
3.	Capt. C. H. E. Adamson, I.S.C.	20- 6-1876 to 10- 2-1877
		12- 1-1884 to 7-12-1885
4.	Major M. C. Poole, I.S.C.	11- 9-1881 to 22- 3-1882
		28- 6-1882 to 21- 2-1883
5.	K. G. Burne, Esq., I.S.C.	23- 3-1882 to 27- 6-1882
6.	S. Hare, Esq.	22- 2-1883 to 11- 7-1883
7.	Lt. Col. H. R. Spearman.	12- 7-1883 to 11- 1-1884
		12- 1-1886 to 29- 2-1888
8.	J. Thompson, Esq.	8-12-1885 to 11- 1-1886
9.	D. Norton, Esq., I.C.S.	1- 3-1888 to 7- 2-1891
10.	Major R. C. Temple, I.S.C., C.I.E.	18- 2-1891 to 8 - 8-1892
		24-12-1892 to 18-12-1893
		19- 1-1894 to 3- 3-1894
11.	J. M. Macrea, Esq.	9- 8-1892 to 23-12-1892
12.	G. M. S. Carter, Esq.	19-12-1893 to 18- 1-1894
13.	W. T. Hall, Esq., B.A., LL.B., I.C.S.	4- 3-1894 to 18- 7-1895
		31-12-1895 to 10- 4-1896
		14-12-1896 to 12- 4-1897
14.	Lt. Col. C. A. Cresswell, I.S.C.	19- 7-1895 to 30-12-1895
15.	H. L. Eales, Esq., I.C.S.	11- 4-1896 to 13-12-1896
		13- 4-1897 to 30- 3-1899
		23- 7-1899 to 9- 8-1899
16.	H. L. Tilly, Esq.	31- 3-1899 to 22- 7-1899
17.	W. H. A. St. John Leeds, Esq., I.C.S.	10- 8-1899 to 28- 5-1903
		20- 9-1903 to 22- 3-1904
18.	M. Laurie, Esq., M.V.O., I.C.S.	29- 5-1903 to 19- 9-1903
		23- 3-1904 to 15- 3-1906
		16- 9-1906 to 10- 5-1910
19.	G. W. Dawson, Esq., I.C.S.	16- 3-1906 to 15- 9-1906
		17- 5-1910 to 25- 1-1911

Municipal Committee—(contd.)

	Names of Presidents.	*Tenure of office.*
20.	W. H. L. Cabell, Esq., I.C.S.	4- 2-1911 to 18- 3-1913
		2-12-1913 to 8- 1-1917
21.	Gavin Scott, Esq., M.A., C.I.E., I.C.S.	19- 3-1913 to 1-12-1913
		9- 1-1917 to 31- 3-1920
		31- 3-1921 to 20-12-1922
22.	J. E. Houldey, Esq., B.A., I.C.S.	1- 4-1920 to 31- 3-1921

(ii) CORPORATION

Names of Presidents.	*Tenure of Office.*
P. P. Ginwala, Esq.. B.A. (Cantab), Barrister-at-law.	21-12-1922 to 3- 7-1923
Dr. Alan M. Murray.	4- 7-1923 to 31-12-1923
Dr. Ba Yin, M.B., Ch.B., D.T.M., L.M.	8- 1-1924 to 31-12-1924
L. Ah Yain, Esq., Barrister-at-law.	6- 1-1925 to 31-12-1925
E. M. Patail, Esq., Barrister-at-law.	5- 1-1926 to 31-12-1926
C. H. Campagnac, Esq., M.B.E., M.L.C., Barrister-at-law.	4- 1-1927 to 31-12-1927
M. M. Ohn Ghine, Esq., M.L.C.	6- 1-1928 to 31-12-1928
M. M. Rafi, Esq., Bar-at-law, M.L.C.	8- 1-1929 to 31-12-1929
Capt. R. B. Rushall, M.B.E.	7- 1-1930 to 31-12-1930
U Thein Maung, M.A., LL.B.	6- 1-1931 to 31-12-1931
U Paw Tun, A.T.M.	5- 1-1932 to 31-12-1932
Dr. R. S. Dugal.	6- 1-1933 to 31-12-1933

Names of Mayors.	*Tenure of Office.*
J. K. Munshi, Esq., M.L.A.	9- 1-1934 to 31-12-1934
U Kyaw Zan.	8- 1-1935 to 31-12-1935
M. M. Rafi, Esq., M.L.C.	7- 1-1936 to 31-12-1936
Dr. Alan Murray.	5- 1-1937 to 31-12-1937
U Ba Glay.	4- 1-1938 to 31-12-1938

Names of Municipal Commissioners.	*Tenure of Office.*
Gavin Scott, Esq., M.A., C.I.E., I.C.S.	1- 4-1921 to 16- 3-1923
C. C. Cameron, Esq., M.B.E.	18- 3-1923 to 16- 5-1923

(iii) CORPORATION—(Contd.)

Names of Municipal Commissioners.	*Tenure of Office.*
Gavin Scott, Esq., M.A., C.I.E., I.C.S.	17- 5-1923 to 12- 3-1925
U Set, B.A.	13- 3-1925 to 21-12-1925
Gavin Scott, Esq., M.A., C.I.E. I.C.S.	22-12-1925 to 18- 1-1929
U Set, B.A., I.A.&A.S.	19- 1-1929 to 14-10-1929
Gavin Scott, Esq., M.A., C.I.E., I.C.S.	15-10-1929 to 14- 4-1930
U Set, B.A., I.A.&A.S.	15- 4-1930 to 7- 3-1933
C. C. Cameron, Esq., M.B.E.	8- 3-1933 to 14- 5-1933
U Set, B.A., I.A.&A.S.	15- 5-1933 to 22- 4-1935
C. C. Cameron, Esq., M.B.E.	23- 4-1935 to 6-12-1935
U Set, C.I.E., B.A., I.A.&A.S.	7-12-1935 onwards.

APPENDIX G: Street-names in Rangoon. (See also pp. 188-9, 206)

The subjoined list does not pretend to be exhaustive; a complete record of all the street-names of Rangoon would run into several hundred. It is merely a statement of some of the more notable names. Obvious place-names, such as *Kemmendine Road*, are omitted.

Name of streets in the Cantonments have in many cases not been traced; probably they are derived from the names of military officers, but the unfortunate destruction of the Cantonment records renders it impossible to obtain accurate information. Even an examination of the records of the India Office has left the majority of these names unidentified.

Adamsom Street	Sir Harvey Adamson, Lieutenant-Governor 1910-1915
Bigandet Street	Bishop Bigandet (see p. 204-5)
Bow Lane	from the shape of the road
Broker Street	residence of Burmese Brokers
Budd Road	a Captain Budd served in Tenasserim from October 1834 to October 1835 as Commandant of a Talaing Corps that was never actually raised; there is no record of his serving in Pegu.
Camp Road	leading to the camping-ground or *maidan*
Campbell Road	perhaps in recollection of Sir Archibald Campbell but the name was not allotted till 1904
Canning Street	Governor-General 1856-1862
Cemetery Road	(now *Queen Victoria Avenue*) Cantonment Cemetery
Cheape Road	Brigadier Sir John Cheape (see p. 181)
Church Road	Cantonment Church
Churchill Road	? Lord Randolph Churchill, Secretary of State 1885-1886
Clark Street	Municipal Engineer (see p. 225)
College Street	St. John's and Baptist Colleges
Commissariat Road	(now *Newlyn Road*) Commissariat Offices
Creek Street	Botataung Creek
Cross Road	from the diagonal position of the road
Culvert Road	culvert over Theinbyu Creek
Dufferin Street	Governor-General 1884-1888
Eden Street	Ashley Eden, Chief Commissioner 1871-1875
Elgin Street	Governor-General 1894-1899
Evanson Street	Town Magistrate (see pp. 203 sqq.)
Fontenoy Road	a firm of Fontenoy existed in Calcutta in the 1860's, but no connection with Rangoon has been discovered.
Forest Road	formerly property of the Forest Depot
Forsyth Road	J. Forsyth, Superintending Surgeon (see p. 202)
Foy Street	E. C. Foy, Municipal Engineer 1903-1907
Fryer Street	Sir Frederick Fryer, Chief Commissioner 1895-1897, Lieutenant-Governor 1897-1903
Fytche Road	Sir Albert Fytche, Chief Commissioner 1867-1871
Grass Road	? from the circumstance that grass for gharry ponies was sold there

Goodliffe Road	F. F. Goodliffe, of Messrs. Barnett, member of the Municipal Committee 1913-1921
Heap Street	Joseph Heap, merchant
Hume Road	Chief Engineer, Burma Railways, who supervised the construction of the original line
Innes Road	residence of Railway officer of that name
Inya Road	Burmese name for the Victoria Lake
Kennedy Street	William Kennedy, Irrawaddy Flotilla Company
Lancaster Road	? Lieut-Col. Col. J. Lancaster, I.M.S., who served in Burma 1874.
Lansdowne Street	Governor-General 1888-1894
Leeds Road	Lieut. E. Leeds, assistant executive engineer, later executive engineer, Cantonments, 1857-1861
Lloyd Road	Captain H. Lloyd, Cantonment Magistrate 1855-1859
Lowis Road	C. C. Lowis, I.C.S., Chief Secretary 1908
Macgregor Street	John Macgregor, member of Municipal Committee 1894-1899, Vice-President 1898-1899, benefactor of the City.
May Oung Road	Sir May Oung, Home Member 1924-1925
Mayo Street	Governor-General 1869-1872
Mill Road	leading to the mills in Upper Pazundaung
Mission Road	American Baptist settlement at Ahlone
Morton Street	Town Magistrate
Nicol Street	W. A. Nicol, member of Municipal Committee 1893-1895
Pedley Street	Dr. T. F. Pedley, Health Officer 1883-1890, member of Municipal Committeee 1893-1895, 1905-1908
Peppin Street	H. A. Peppin, member of Municipal Committee 1897-1904
Philpott Street	G. Philpott, Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation
Rowett Street	W. Q. Rowett, member of Municipal Committee 1891-1893, 1899-1900
St. John's Road	St. John's College
Simpson Road	Rev. J. N. Simpson, Head Master, Diocesan School, 1865-1867
Stewart Road	Sir. R. C. Stewart, commanded in Burma 1890-1895
Stirrat Road	Municipal Engineer 1890-1903
Sutherland Road	Municipal Health Officer 1890-1895
Tank Road	tank on site of present Pegu Club tennis courts
Thompson Street	A. Rivers Thompson, Chief Commissioner 1875-1878
Tiger Alley	probably a soldiers' name for the old *Magistrate's Boundary Road*
Transport Road	military transport lines
U Ohn Ghine Road	member of Municipal Committee 1899-1911
Vinton Street	American Baptist missionary, founded the Baptist settlement at Ahlone, 1852
Wales Street	Municipal Secretary 1906-1912

INDEX

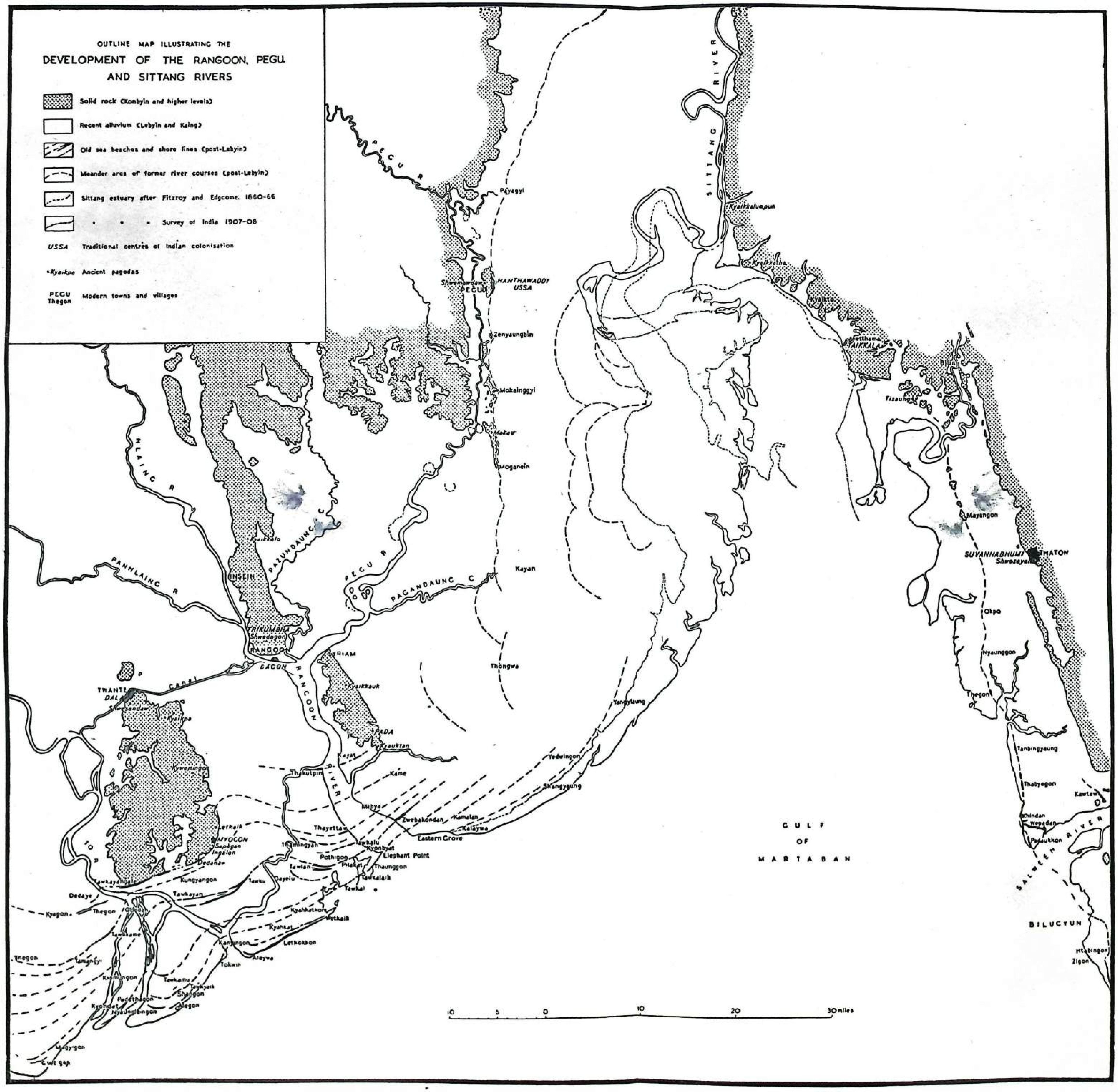
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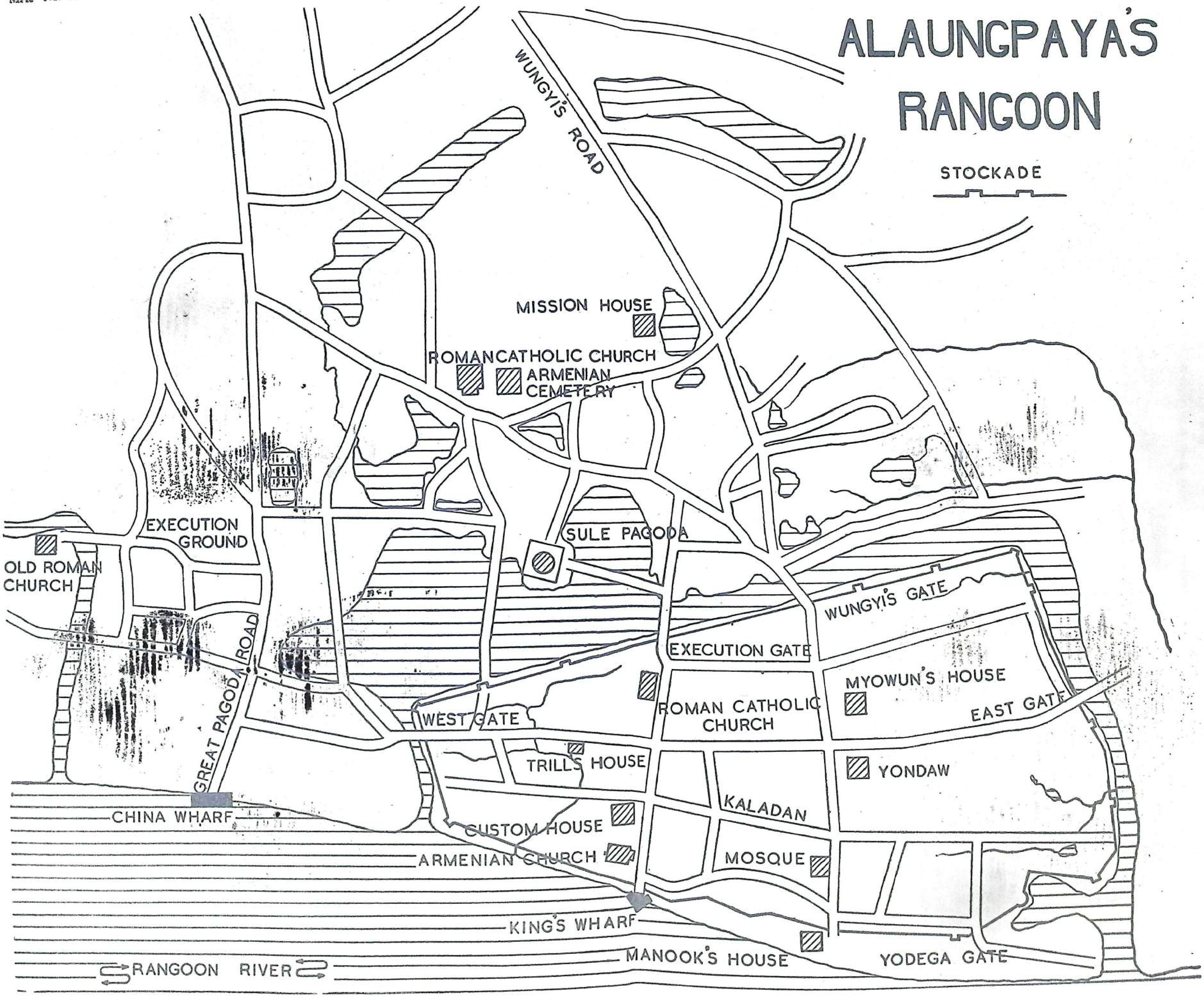
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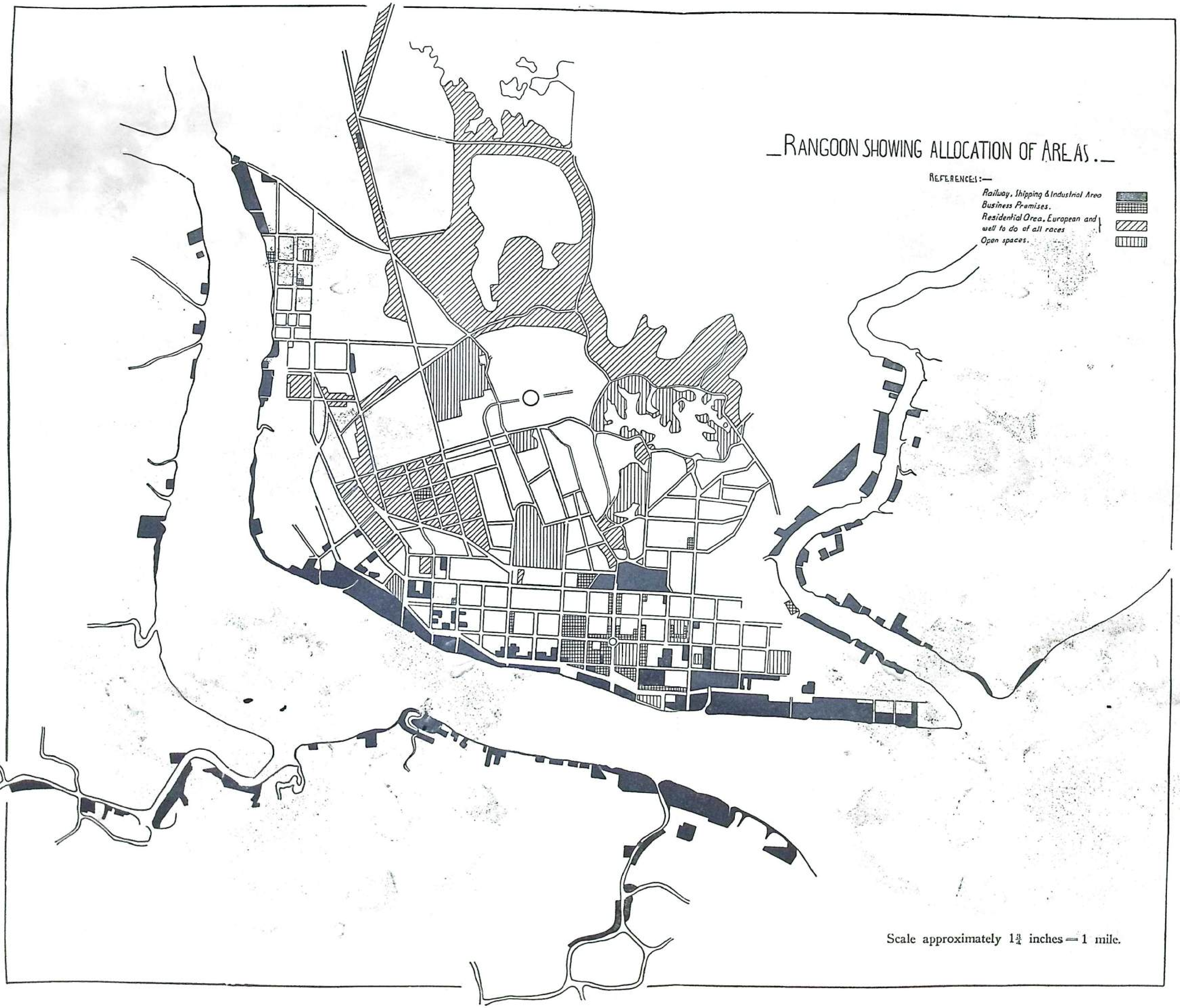
MAP No. I


OUTLINE MAP ILLUSTRATING THE
DEVELOPMENT OF THE RANGOON, PEGU AND SITTANG RIVERS
Solid rock (Konbyin and higher levels)
Recent alluvium (Lebyin and Kaing)
Old sea beaches and shore lines (post-Lebyin)
Meander arcs of former river courses (post-Lebyin)
Sittang estuary after Fitzroy and Edgcome. 1860-66
Survey of India 1907-08
USSA Traditional centres of Indian colonisation
Kyaikpa Ancient pagodas
PEGU Thegon Modern towns and villages
PEGU R
SITTANG RIVER
HLAING R
PANHLAING R
PAZUNDAUNG C
PAGANDAUNG C
RANGOON RIVER
SALWEEN RIVER
HANTHAWADDY USSA
TAIKKALA
SUVANNABHUMI
THATON
INSEIN
TRIKUMBHA
RANGOON
SYRIAM
TWANTE
DALA
KYAUKTAN
BILUGYUN
GULF OF MARTABAN
10 5 0 10 20 30 miles

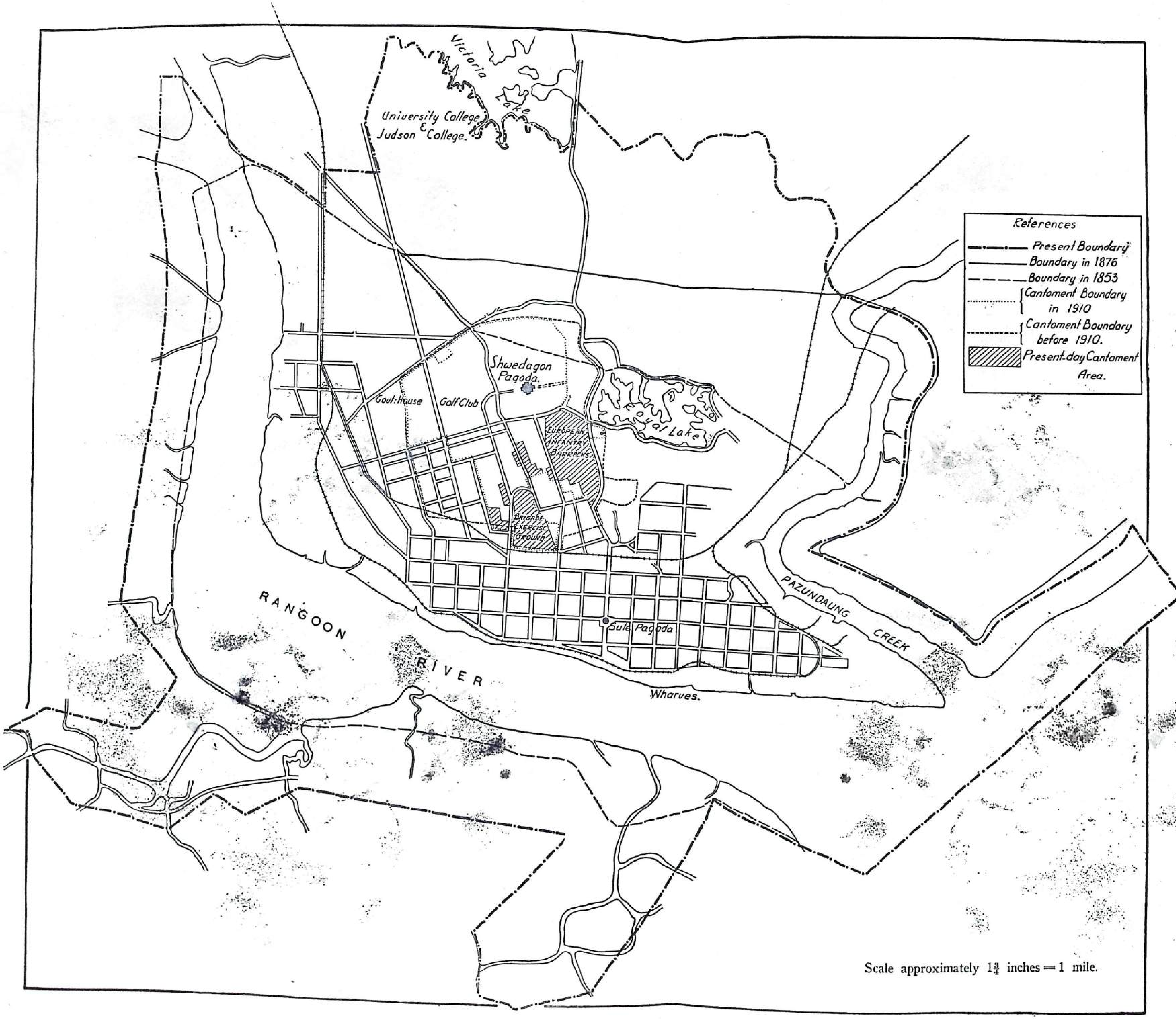
MAP No. IV


ALAUNGPAYA'S
RANGOON
STOCKADE
WUNGYI'S ROAD
MISSION HOUSE
ROMANCATHOLIC CHURCH
ARMENIAN
CEMETERY
EXECUTION
GROUND
SULE PAGODA
OLD ROMAN
CHURCH
WUNGYI'S GATE
EXECUTION GATE
MYOWUN'S HOUSE
GREAT PAGODA ROAD
WEST GATE
ROMAN CATHOLIC
CHURCH
EAST GATE
TRILL'S HOUSE
YONDAW
KALADAN
CHINA WHARF
CUSTOM HOUSE
ARMENIAN CHURCH
MOSQUE
KING'S WHARF
MANOOK'S HOUSE
YODEGA GATE
RANGOON RIVER

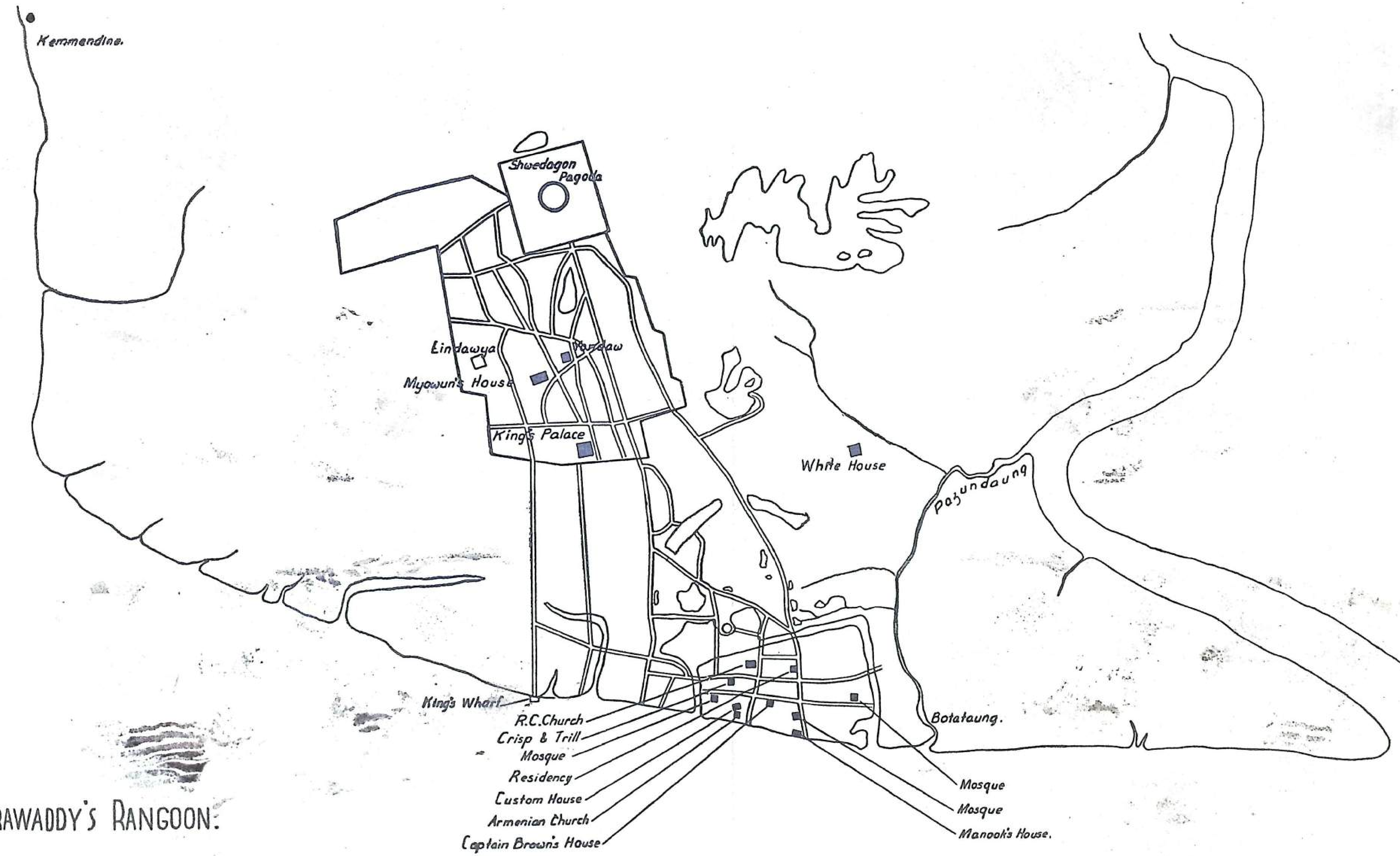
MAP No. VII


RANGOON SHOWING ALLOCATION OF AREAS.
REFERENCES:—
Railway, Shipping & Industrial Area
Business Premises.
Residential Orea, European and well to do of all races
Open spaces.
Scale approximately 1¼ inches = 1 mile.

MAP No. VI


Victoria Lake
University College & Judson College.
References
Present Boundary
Boundary in 1876
Boundary in 1853
Cantoment Boundary in 1910
Cantoment Boundary before 1910.
Present-day Cantoment Area.
Shwedagon Pagoda.
Govt. House
Golf Club
Royal Lake
European Infantry Barracks.
Brigade Exercise Ground
Sule Pagoda
Wharves.
Rangoon River
Pazundaung Creek
Scale approximately 1¾ inches = 1 mile.

MAP No. V



THARRAWADDY'S RANGOON.